shiwo komeyama

6

# BLOODY CROSS

# BLOODY CROSS

Shiwo Komeyama

6

BLOODY CROSS

## 06 contents


24 : Impending Threat 003

25 : The Captured 041

26 : The Sought Object 079

27 : Kindhearted Beasts 117

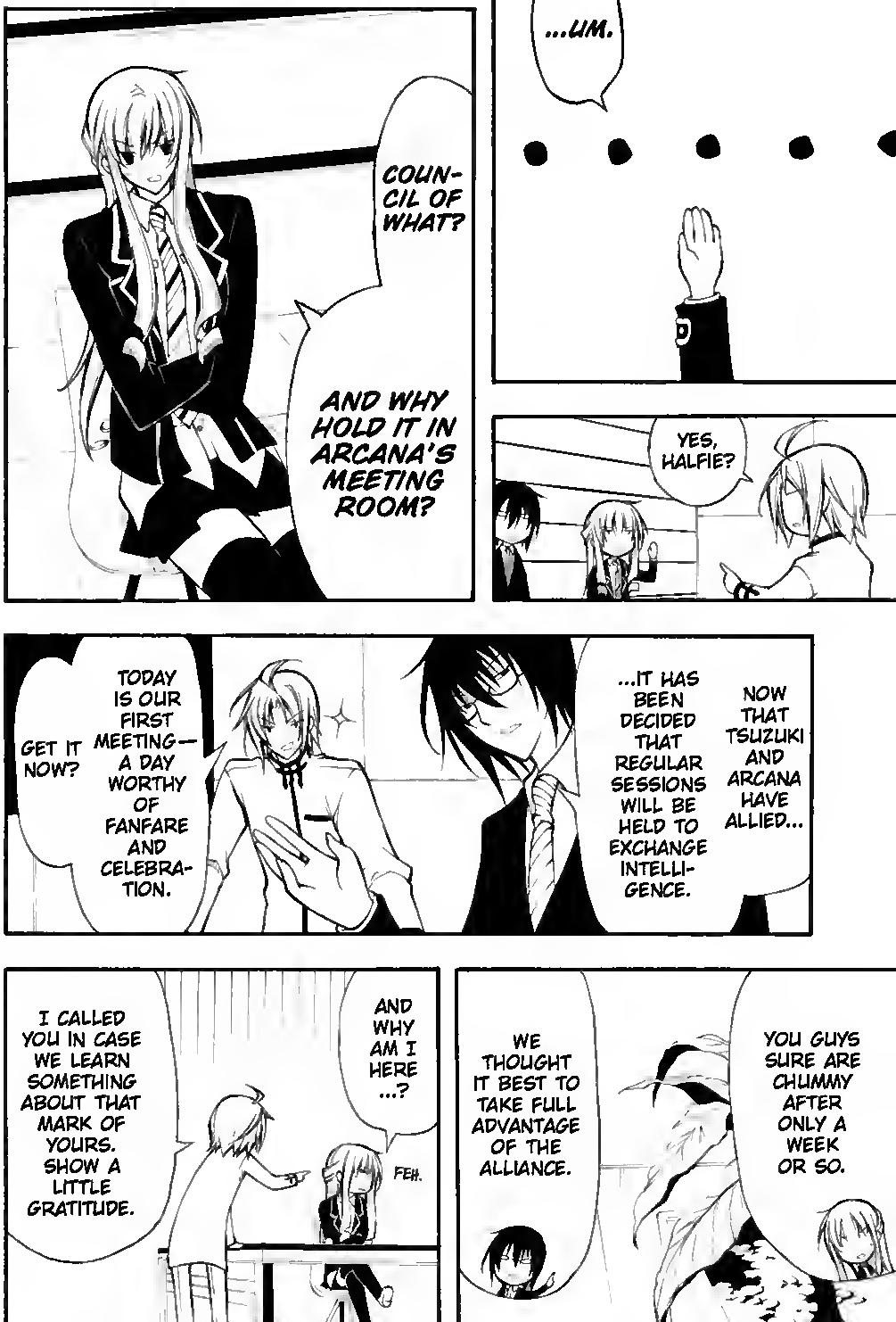
28 : In the Darkness 153

29 : Sleepless Night 183

# Chapter 24
# Impending Threat

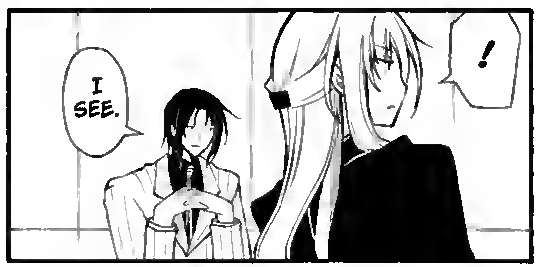
BLOODY CROSS

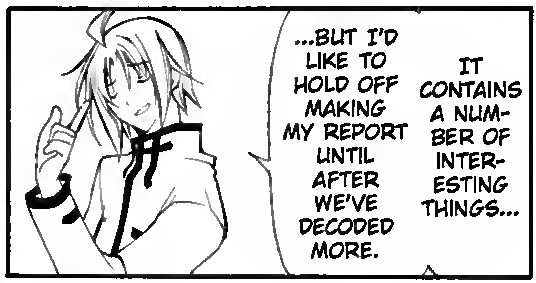
ALL RIGHT!
ARE YOU ALL READY!!?
DON GBAND
LET THE INAUGURAL JOINT COUNCIL MEETING COMMENCE!


...UM.
YES, HALFIE?
COUN-CIL OF WHAT?
AND WHY HOLD IT IN ARCANA'S MEETING ROOM?
NOW THAT TSUZUKI AND ARCANA HAVE ALLIED...
...IT HAS BEEN DECIDED THAT REGULAR SESSIONS WILL BE HELD TO EXCHANGE INTELLI-GENCE.
TODAY IS OUR FIRST MEETING— A DAY WORTHY OF FANFARE AND CELEBRA-TION.
GET IT NOW?
YOU GUYS SURE ARE CHUMMY AFTER ONLY A WEEK OR SO.
WE THOUGHT IT BEST TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THE ALLIANCE.
AND WHY AM I HERE ...?
FEH.
I CALLED YOU IN CASE WE LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT THAT MARK OF YOURS. SHOW A LITTLE GRATITUDE.

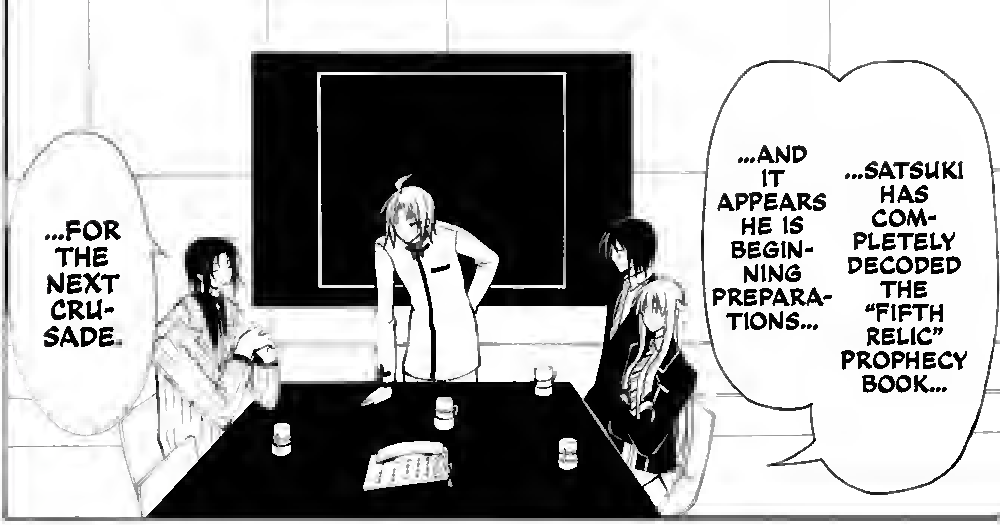
SO?
ANY DEVELOP-MENTS?
AH, YES. OF COURSE.

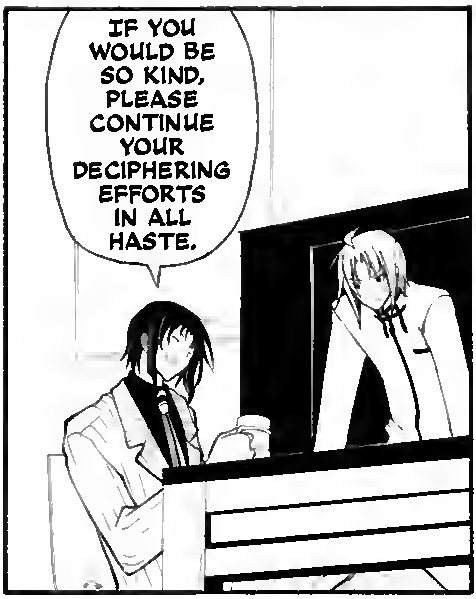
WE'VE BEGUN DECODING THE "FIRST RELIC" PROPHECY BOOK.

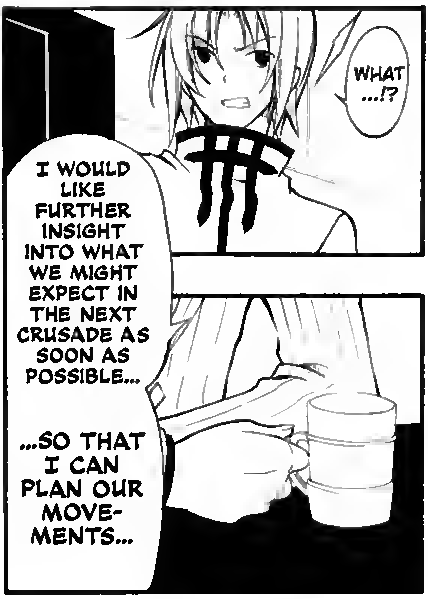

!
I SEE.


IT CONTAINS A NUM-BER OF INTER-ESTING THINGS...
...BUT I'D LIKE TO HOLD OFF MAKING MY REPORT UNTIL AFTER WE'VE DECODED MORE.

BE EASIER TO SUM-MARIZE THINGS THAT WAY TOO.
DON'T YOU AGREE!?
... INDEED.


...SATSUKI HAS COMPLETELY DECODED THE "FIFTH RELIC" PROPHECY BOOK...
...AND IT APPEARS HE IS BEGINNING PREPARATIONS...
...FOR THE NEXT CRUSADE.


IF YOU WOULD BE SO KIND, PLEASE CONTINUE YOUR DECIPHERING EFFORTS IN ALL HASTE.

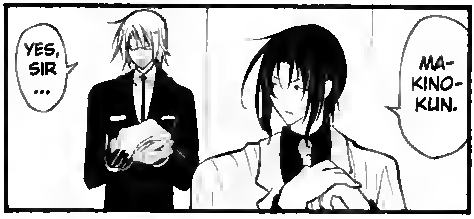

WHAT ...!?
I WOULD LIKE FURTHER INSIGHT INTO WHAT WE MIGHT EXPECT IN THE NEXT CRUSADE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE...
...SO THAT I CAN PLAN OUR MOVEMENTS...

IT WAS WISE TO JOIN FORCES WITH THEM.
...ARCANA REALLY IS SUPERIOR IN THIS KIND OF INTEL...

...WE ARE ACTIVELY GATHERING OTHER SCATTERED DIVINE RELICS.
AT PRESENT...
WE'VE MANAGED TO ACQUIRE SEVERAL OF THEM.
OF COURSE ...
...THEY'RE JUST REGULAR RELICS, NOT THE CRUSADE ITEMS.
.....
SO HOW MANY HAVE YOU GOT RIGHT NOW, ANYWAY?
YOU'VE COME UPON SOME PRETTY FAMOUS ONES TOO, HAVEN'T YOU?
THERE ARE LOTS OF FOLKS OUT COLLECTING GOD'S RELICS...
...BUT NONE WITH THE SUCCESS RATE OF ARCANA.
IT SEEMS TO FOLLOW ...
...THAT ARCANA MOST LIKELY HAS THE RAREST ONES AS WELL, NO?
...ONCE YOU'VE FINISHED DECODING THE FIRST RELIC...
...PERHAPS WE CAN SPEAK MORE FREELY WITH EACH OTHER AND SHARE A BIT MORE.

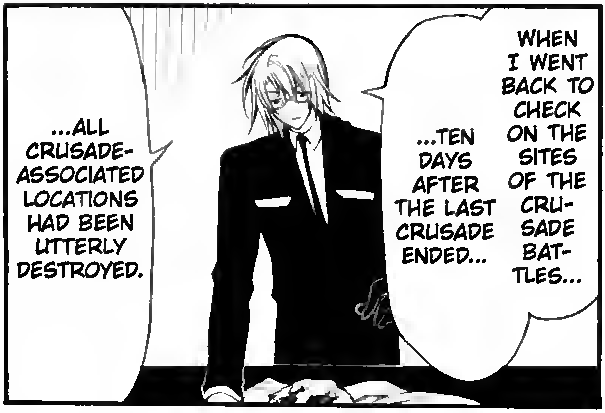
GO TO
UKIUNKI
ゴト

HUH?
...SOMETHING WORRISOME CAME UP DURING A RECENT RELIC RECOVERY.
SPEAKING OF WHICH ...


YES, SIR ...
MAKINO-KUN.

.....
WHAT IS IT?

THIS...


...ALL CRUSADE-ASSOCIATED LOCATIONS HAD BEEN UTTERLY DESTROYED.
...TEN DAYS AFTER THE LAST CRUSADE ENDED...
WHEN I WENT BACK TO CHECK ON THE SITES OF THE CRUSADE BATTLES...

...IS WHAT REMAINS OF THE BURNED CHURCH...
...WHERE SATSUKI'S SPY AND HINATA WERE LAST.
THAT CHURCH .....
BUT HINATA'S BODY WASN'T THERE.
FROM HIS BLOOD, I WAS ABLE TO "SEE" THE SCENE OF NAO STABBING HIM...
...BUT I COULDN'T CONFIRM WHETHER HE DIED OR NOT.

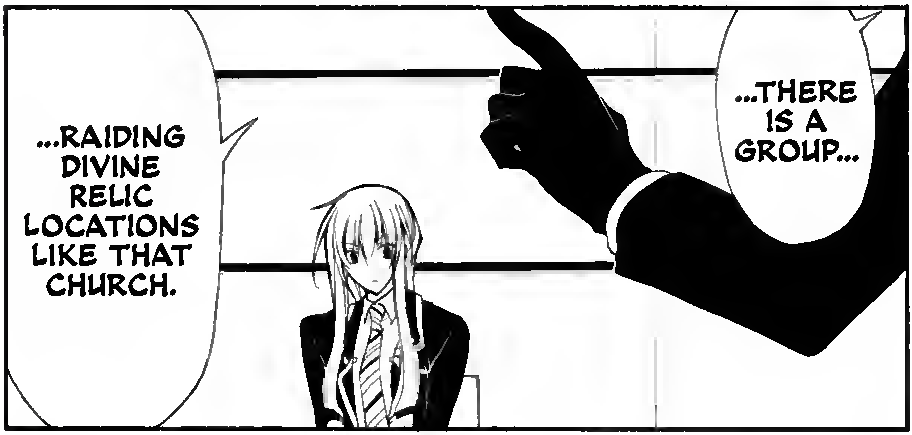
KATSU
CTAK
...MAY VIOLATE ARTICLE 12 OF THE CRUSADE CONCEALMENT CODE
THIS CHURCH'S EXISTENCE...
THEREFORE, UPON MY JUDGMENT...
...I EXPUNGE IT.
...MY NAME IS TOKIWA.
I EXPECT YOU'VE NOTICED— I'M...A FALLEN ANGEL
.....
WHY WOULD A FALLEN ANGEL HAVE THE SAME MARK AS ME?
I THOUGHT ...
...IT WAS AN EXTENSION OF THE MIXED-RACE CURSE!?

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED. I'M HEADING BACK.
CHEE
ヒ
……
PLLL
…—
TSUKIMIYA…
…I AM CERTAIN WE'LL BE SEEING EACH OTHER AGAIN SOON.
WE'LL TALK THEN.
…EY!
HEY !!!
GO OWHOKO
BUT YOU WEREN'T LISTENING!
WHAT !?
PIPE DOWN, WILL YA!?
キン KIN
KIN (RING)

KOHO (AHEM)
WELL... IN SHORT, THE CHURCH AND THE PLACES WHERE THE FOURTH AND FIFTH RELICS EMERGED...
...HAVE ALL BEEN WIPED OUT WITHOUT A TRACE.

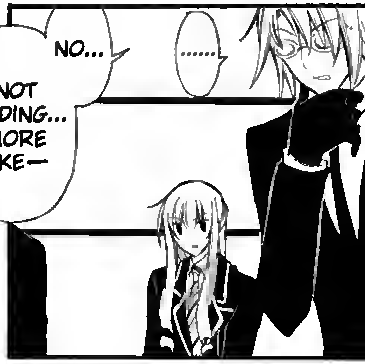
...I WAS TOO LISTENING.
PLEASE GO ON.
.....
KIN (RING)
キン

...ACTUALLY...


...THERE IS A GROUP...
...RAIDING DIVINE RELIC LOCATIONS LIKE THAT CHURCH.

!
YES! EXPUNGING!

"EXPUNGING."


NO... NOT RAIDING... MORE LIKE—
.....

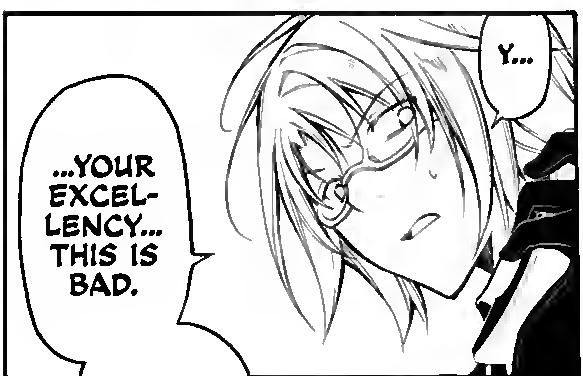
THIS GROUP HAS SEIZED A NUMBER OF THE DIVINE RELICS...
...THAT WE HAD BEEN TRYING TO OBTAIN.
!
THAT'S A REAL PAIN.
...WE CERTAINLY THINK THEY'RE A PAIN.
AND I'M SURE THEY CONSIDER ARCANA A PAIN TOO.
TOKIWA...
DIDN'T HE SAY THE CRUSADES WERE UNDER HIS GOVERNANCE FROM HERE ON?
WHO OR WHAT IS HE.....?
PLL.
(LOCK) ING
I TOLD THEM NOT TO CALL WHILE WE WERE IN OUR MEETING!
.....!
PLL
PLL.
PLL

PLLL
PLLL

WHAT?
...HUH?

WE HAVE VISITORS!
...
GACHA GACHA

PLLL
PLLL


Y...
...YOUR EXCELLENCY... THIS IS BAD.
DOWNSTAIRS —

.....
.....!

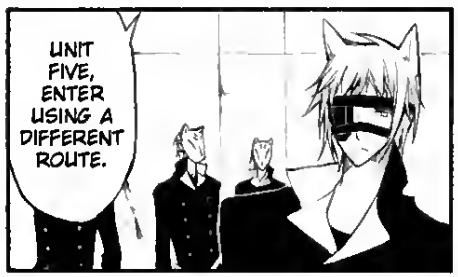
DOON (BOOM)
!?
WHAT THE ...!?
HEY, WHAT JUST HAP-PENED !?
...SO THIS IS ARCANA'S STRONG-HOLD, IS IT?
GA (GTONG)
ARCANA
HEY... HELLO?
HELLO!?

DON'T TELL ME...
...THIS ENTIRE BUILDING IS ARCANA?

...COMMENCE OUR PURGE OF ARCANA.
ARCAN

WE HEREBY ...

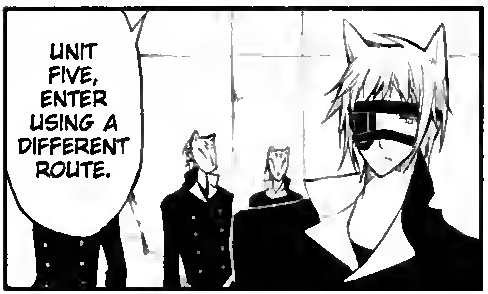
UNIT TWO, JOIN UP WITH US IN UNIT ONE.


UNIT FIVE, ENTER USING A DIFFERENT ROUTE.

ARCANA ONLY HOLDS FLOORS THIRTY THROUGH FIFTY
...GOOD, GOOD
IT WOULD TAKE HALF A DAY TO TAKE CONTROL OF THE WHOLE BUILDING.

DON'T TELL ME...
...THIS ENTIRE BUILDING IS ARCANA?

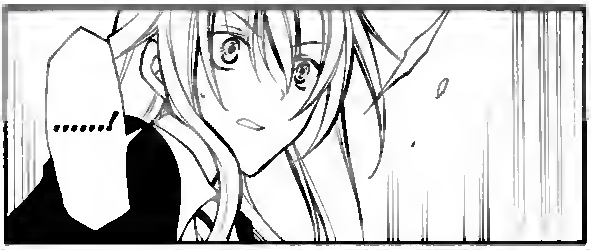
UNIT TWO, JOIN UP WITH US IN UNIT ONE.

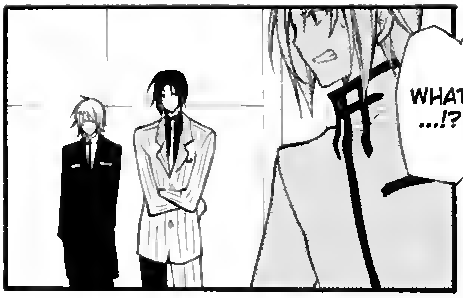

UNIT FIVE, ENTER USING A DIFFERENT ROUTE.

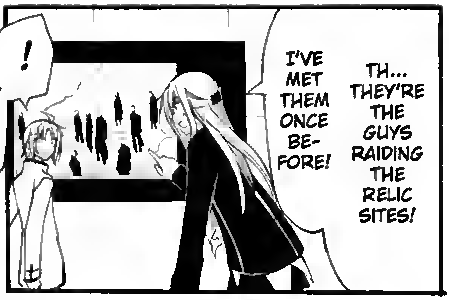
ARCANA ONLY HOLDS FLOORS THIRTY THROUGH FIFTY.
IT WOULD TAKE HALF A DAY TO TAKE CONTROL OF THE WHOLE BUILDING.
...GOOD. GOOD.

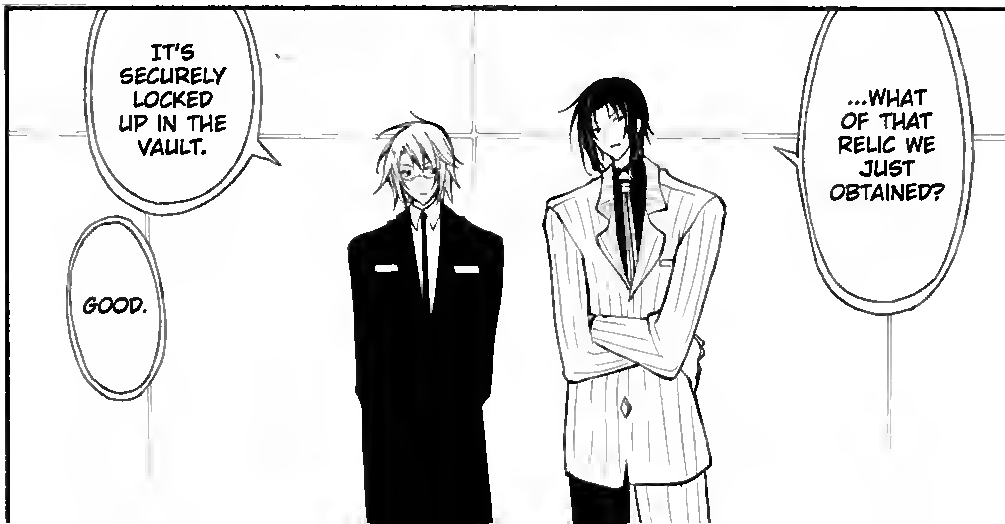
...COM-
MENCE
OUR
PURGE
OF
ARCANA.
ARCAN
WE
HEREBY
...

WHO THE HECK ARE THEY?

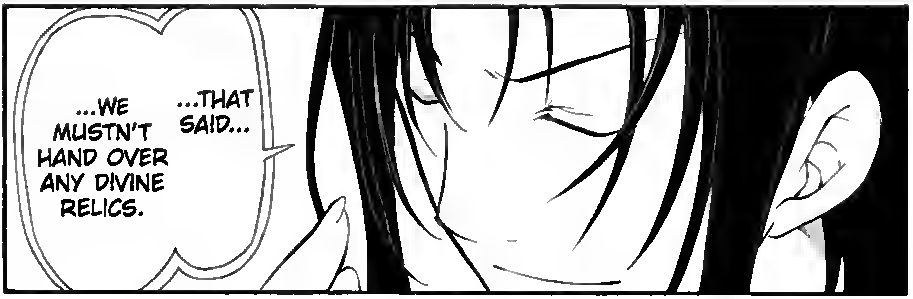

.....!


WHAT ...!?
!

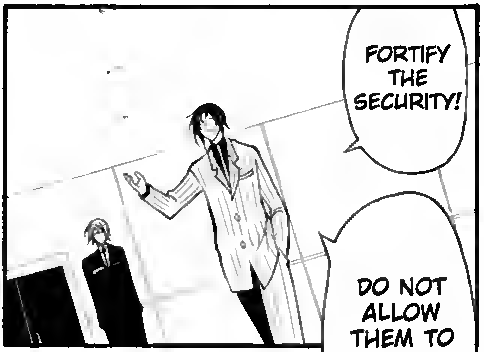

TH... THEY'RE THE GUYS RAIDING THE RELIC SITES!
I'VE MET THEM ONCE BE-FORE!


...WHAT OF THAT RELIC WE JUST OBTAINED?
IT'S SECURELY LOCKED UP IN THE VAULT.
GOOD.

THIS WASN'T IN THE FUTURE I SAW...
THE FUTURE SHIFTED WHEN WE MEDDLED WITH THE LAST CRUSADE.

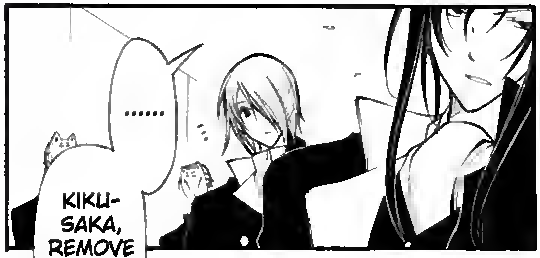

...THAT SAID...
...WE MUSTN'T HAND OVER ANY DIVINE RELICS.

UNDER-STOOD.
I SHALL SEE THAT OUR UNSCHED-ULED VISITORS MAKE THEIR EXIT.


FORTIFY THE SECURITY!

DO NOT ALLOW THEM TO INTRUDE ANY FARTHER.

KATSU
CTAKO
カツ


.....
KIKU-
SAKA,
REMOVE
THEM.

TON
CTNK
...YEAH,
YEAH.

OUR
SUPER-
VISOR
CANNOT
MEET
WITH
YOU.
PLEASE
LEAVE.

.....
IF
YOU
WILL
NOT
LEAVE
ON
YOUR
OWN
...
...WE
SHALL
FORC-
IBLY
RE—

DO (THD)
...ISN'T A BAD WAY TO DIE, DEAR LADIES.
TO BE KILLED WITH A DIVINE RELIC...

...HUH?
WHADJA SAY?

BYU (ZLASH)

YOU OUGHT TO THANK ME.

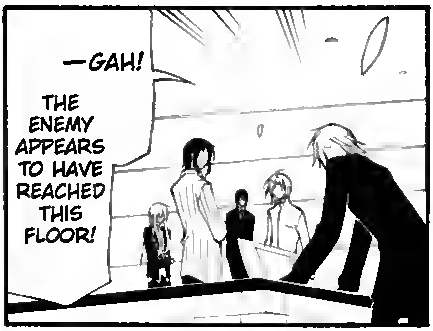
DO CSHHK

AAA CSHHD

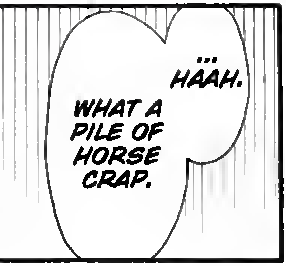
ZAAAA CSHHHD

I'VE CLEARED THE WAY FOR YOU.
THERE, TOKIWA-SAN.

THIS SEEMS TO BE QUITE THE BOTHER-SOME ENEMY.
I SUGGEST WE EVACUATE... I'LL HAVE YOU ESCORTED TO THE BACK DOOR.


—GAH!
THE ENEMY APPEARS TO HAVE REACHED THIS FLOOR!

MODERN CONSTRUC-TIONS ARE SIMPLY TOO EASY TO BREACH.
THOSE ELEVA-TORS ARE REALLY A PROB-LEM.


... HAAH.
WHAT A PILE OF HORSE CRAP.

IT'S THIS WAY.
YOU OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO MAKE YOUR ESCAPE OUT THE REAR.
THEY HAVEN'T COM-PLETELY SUR-ROUNDED US YET.

WHY MAKE AN ALLI-ANCE...
...IF YOU WON'T LET ME LEND YOU A HAND SO YOU CAN RETURN THE FAVOR LATER?

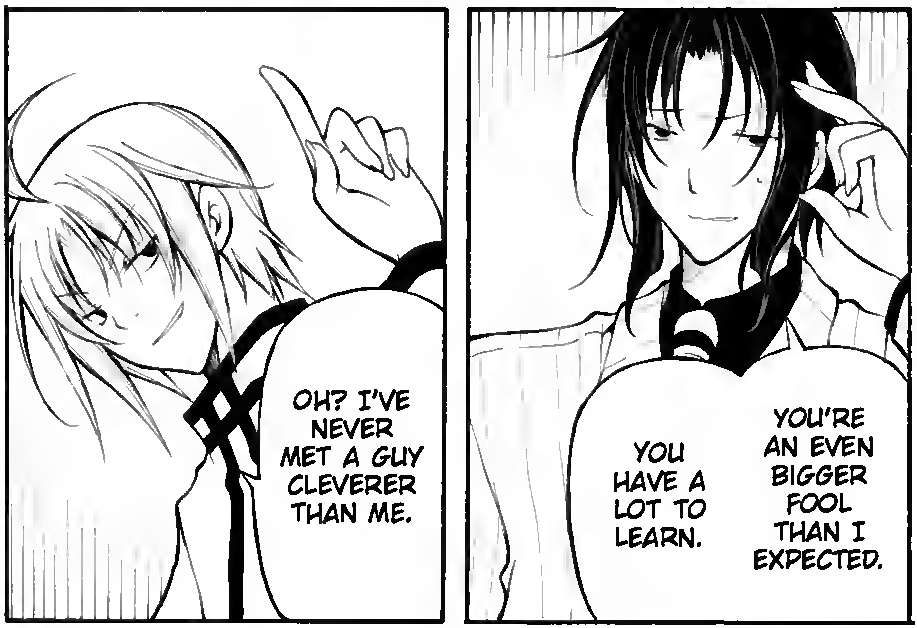
ROG-ER.
BOTH-ER.

...BUT YOU ALL BE AT THE READY, JUST IN CASE.
I THINK I'LL HAVE NO PROBLEM HANDLING THEM ON MY OWN...
...UM?
?

..... HUH?

I'LL MAKE OUT A HUUUGE IOU, WHICH YOU CAN REPAY LATER!
(POINT)
SHEESH ...
IF ARCANA GOES BUST, I'M THE ONE INCONVE-NIENCED!

...THAT YOU'RE SO EAGER TO GET US OUT OF HERE AS QUICK AS POSSIBLE?
OR IS THERE SOMETHING YOU DON'T WANT US TO KNOW ABOUT...
.....

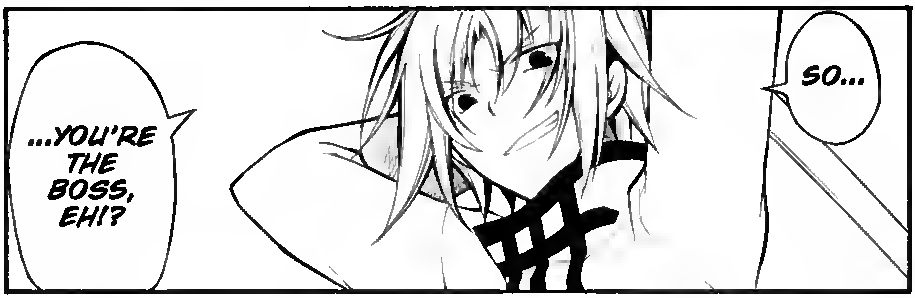

OH? I'VE NEVER MET A GUY CLEVERER THAN ME.
YOU'RE AN EVEN BIGGER FOOL THAN I EXPECTED.
YOU HAVE A LOT TO LEARN.

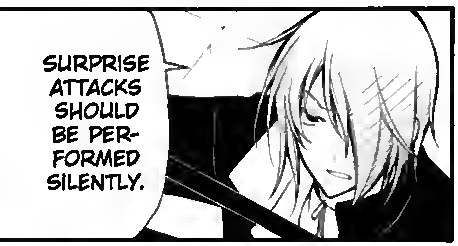
THE ENEMY ...
...IS VERY CLOSE NOW!

KATSU (TAK)
DOKA
DOKA (STOMP)
DOKA
DON (WHAM)
IF YOU'D RATHER NOT DIE POINT-LESSLY...
...ALL OF YOU...
...BEHAVE YOUR-SELVES AND DON'T RESIST.

—WELL, LOOK AT MR. HIGH-AND-MIGHTY HERE.

I'M PLEASED WE FOUND YOU SO EASILY.
YOU'RE THE HEAD OF ARCANA?


SO...
...YOU'RE THE BOSS, EH!?


SURPRISE ATTACKS SHOULD BE PERFORMED SILENTLY.

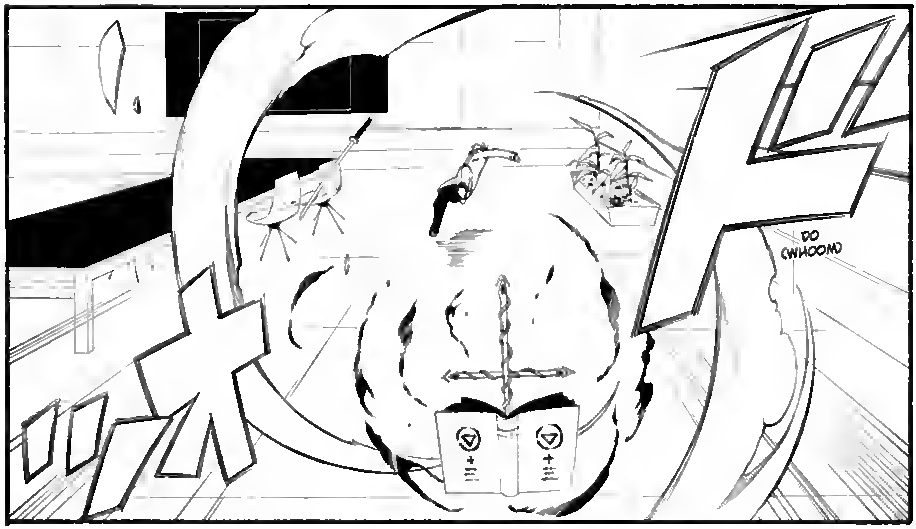
I WASN'T ASKING YOU, RIFF-RAFF.

GIN (CLANG)

DON
DON
DON
JA CHAAO
AID THE CAPTAIN ...!
DO CHLAAO
ZAA CHOOSHO
CEASE!
SHACK-LE!!

WHA ...!?
YOU TOO!
SHACKLE HIM!!
ZAM

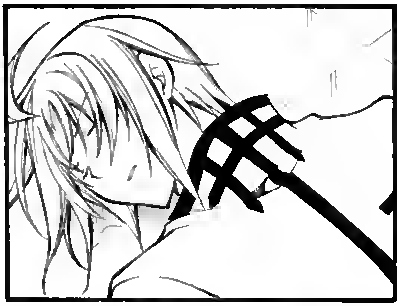
KIIII (VWEE)
HUH ...?
VLIN (VWMM)


DO (WHOOM)

GA (GRAB)
...IT'S NOTH-ING TO GAWK AT.
!?

I MERELY USED AN ANTI-ANGEL RELIC ON HIM.

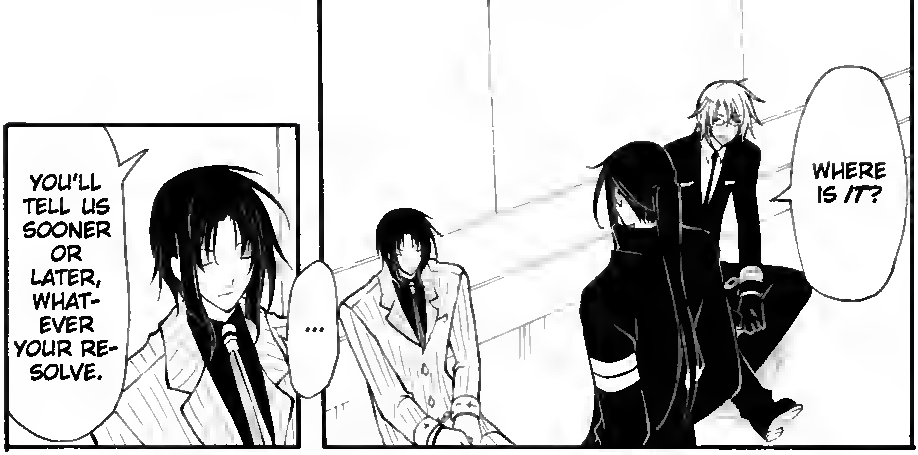
I LEARNED THAT A GOD CANDIDATE WOULD BE HERE.

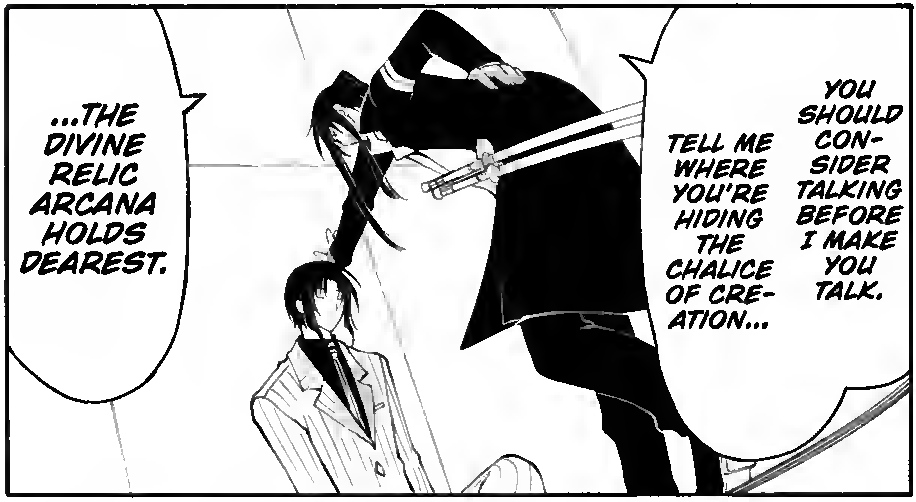


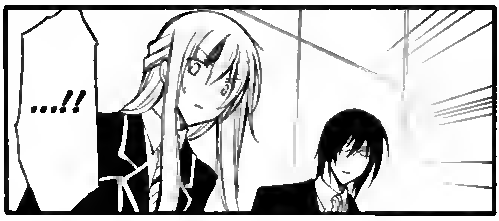
SU (SSK)

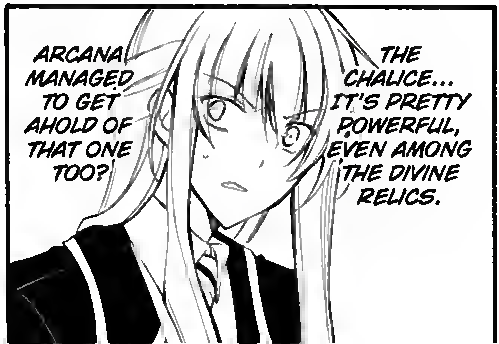
PARI (CRACKLE)
.....

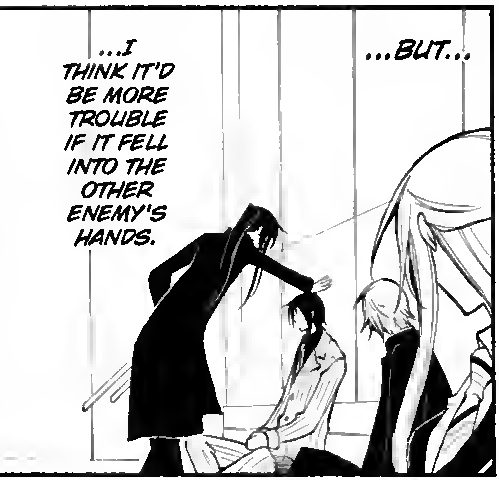
I THINK IT BETTER THAT WE BIDE OUR TIME.
SO DON'T. THEY'LL TARGET YOU IF YOU MOVE TO ATTACK.
MIGHT BE QUICKER TO HAVE THE HEAD HONCHO TELL US WHERE THEY ARE, EH?
...BUT THE MORE SIGNIFICANT ONES ARE HIDDEN QUITE SECURELY.
ABOUT 80% HAVE BEEN RE-TRIEVED...
WE'VE FINISHED OUR TAKE-OVER...
...AND ARE CURRENTLY SEARCHING FOR DIVINE RELICS.


WHERE IS IT?
...
YOU'LL TELL US SOONER OR LATER, WHATEVER YOUR RESOLVE.


YOU SHOULD CONSIDER TALKING BEFORE I MAKE YOU TALK.
TELL ME WHERE YOU'RE HIDING THE CHALICE OF CREATION...
...THE DIVINE RELIC ARCANA HOLDS DEAREST.


...!!

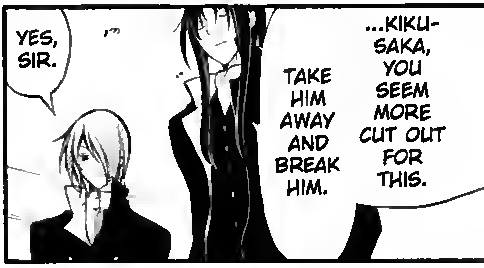

THE CHALICE... IT'S PRETTY POWERFUL, EVEN AMONG THE DIVINE RELICS.
ARCANA MANAGED TO GET AHOLD OF THAT ONE TOO?

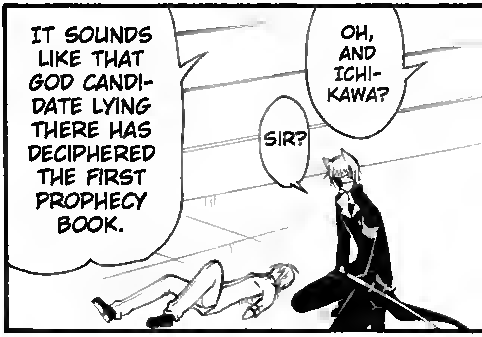

...BUT...
...I THINK IT'D BE MORE TROUBLE IF IT FELL INTO THE OTHER ENEMY'S HANDS.

...HOW DARE YOU MARCH IN HERE WITHOUT AN INVITATION...
...AND REVEAL OUR PRIVATE MATTERS IN FRONT OF VISITORS?

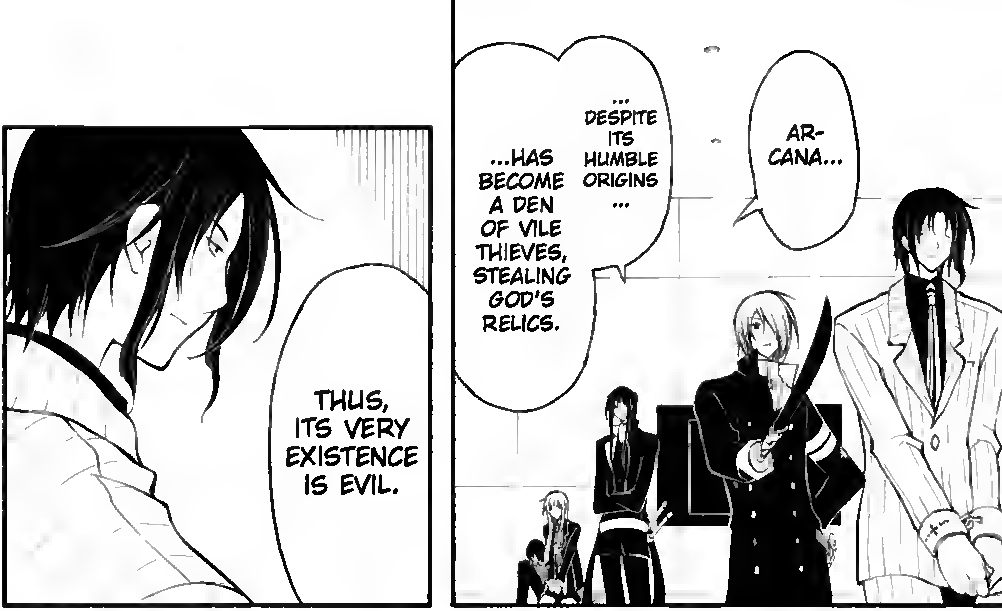
I CAN'T HELP BUT QUESTION YOUR UPBRINGING.
TRULY NO CLASS AT ALL.

TAKE HIM AWAY TOO.
A GOD CANDIDATE IN THE FLESH IS AN UNEXPECTED PRIZE.


...KIKUSAKA, YOU SEEM MORE CUT OUT FOR THIS.
TAKE HIM AWAY AND BREAK HIM.
YES, SIR.

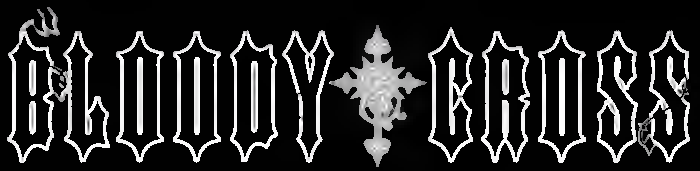

OH, AND ICHIKAWA?
SIR?
IT SOUNDS LIKE THAT GOD CANDIDATE LYING THERE HAS DECIPHERED THE FIRST PROPHECY BOOK.

...DON'T MOVE WITHOUT MY PERMISSION.
GATA (CLATTER)
NGH...
DON (SLAM)
DON
GAH!
YOU'RE NOT ARCANA.
IF YOU WANT TO LIVE, DON'T RESIST.
GIRI (GRIT)
WE MEET AGAIN.

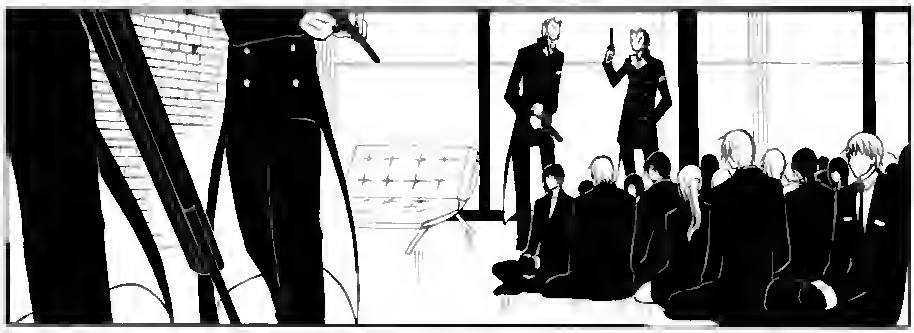

AR-
CANA...
...
DESPITE
ITS
HUMBLE
ORIGINS
...
...HAS
BECOME
A DEN
OF VILE
THIEVES,
STEALING
GOD'S
RELICS.
THUS,
ITS VERY
EXISTENCE
IS EVIL.

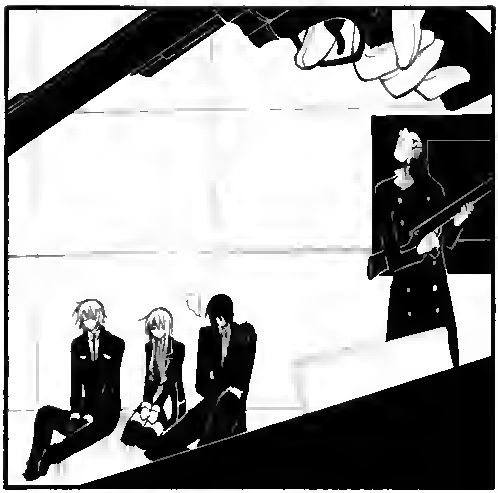
IT SHALL
BE PURGED
BY WE OF
KAMU-
HABURI...

ITS
EXIS-
TENCE
...
...SHALL
BE EX-
PUNGED.


BLOODY CROSS

BLOODY CROSS

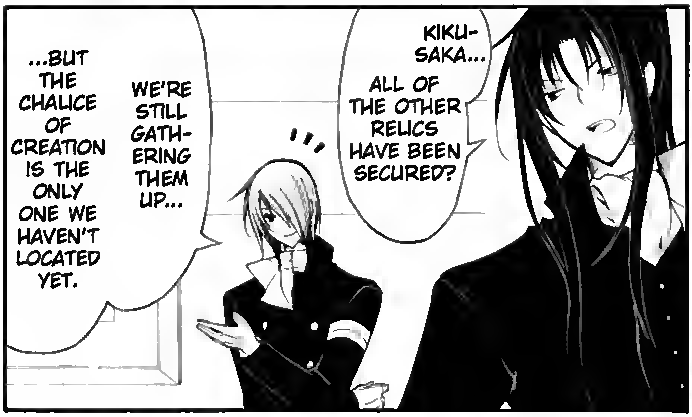




# Chapter 23
# The Captured

...YES, RESISTANCE WOULD BE USELESS AT THIS POINT.
I WOULDN'T TRY ANY-THING.

WELL?
WHAT DO YOU SAY, BOSS?
GU (GRIP)


KIKU-SAKA...
ALL OF THE OTHER RELICS HAVE BEEN SECURED?
WE'RE STILL GATH-ERING THEM UP...
...BUT THE CHALICE OF CREATION IS THE ONLY ONE WE HAVEN'T LOCATED YET.

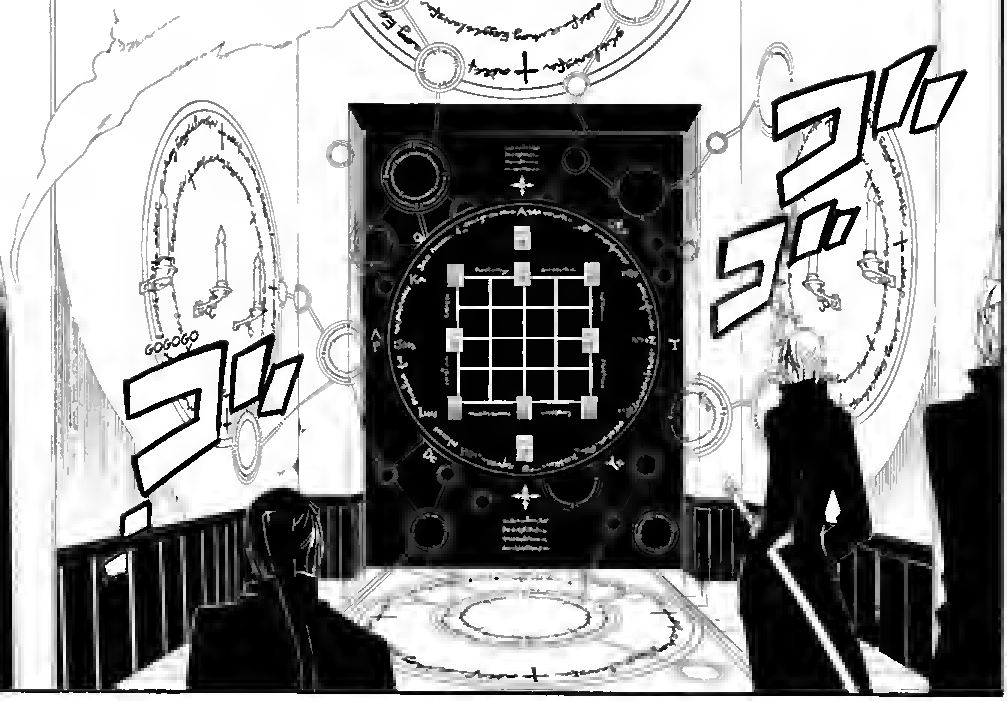
...WHERE HAVE YOU HIDDEN IT?
IT SEEMS INSTINC-TUAL TO HIDE VALUABLE ITEMS IN PLAIN SIGHT...
...SO I FIND THIS ROOM TO BE THE MOST SUSPECT.

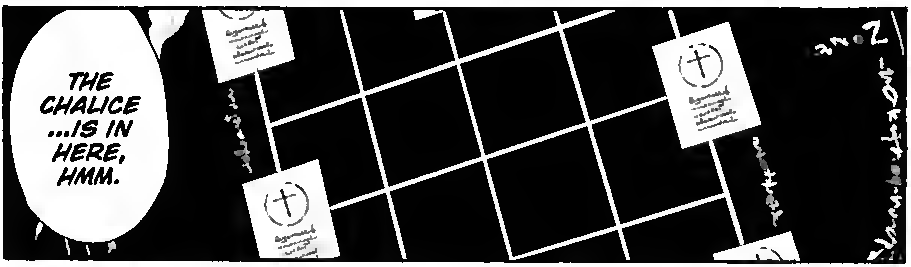
DO (SHOVE)

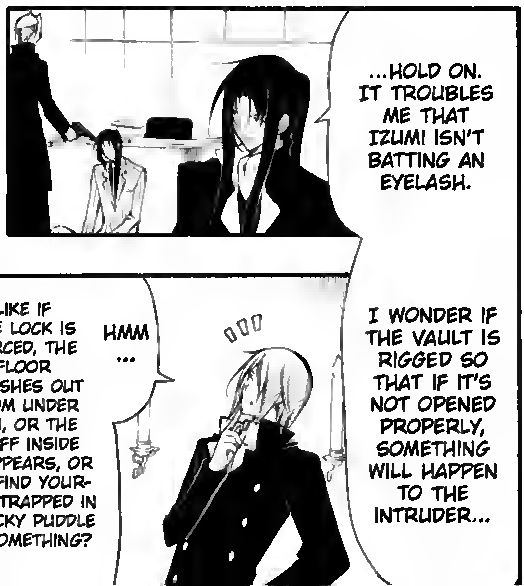
...DID YOU KNOW?
GA (GRAB)
THAT THE CHALICE HOLDS A VAST ENERGY CAPABLE OF PRODUCING MIRACLES?
RESURRECTION, REGENERATION, IMMORTALITY...

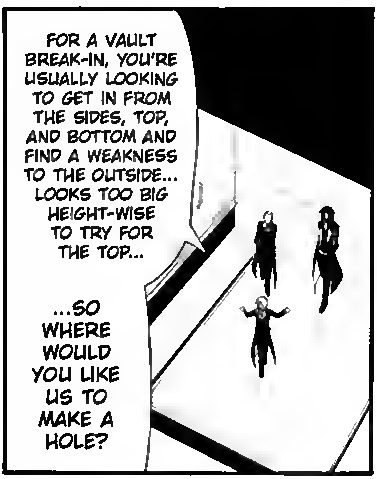
WHAT EXACTLY... WERE YOU PLANNING TO USE IT FOR?
.....
I MIGHT ASK THE SAME OF THE MAN WHO CAME HERE TO STEAL IT.

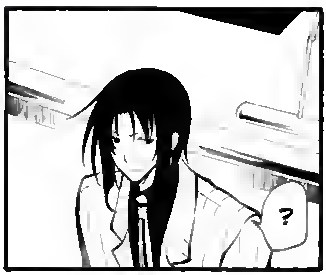
OH! FOUND A SECRET DOOR MECHANISM RIGHT OFF!
PI (BEEP)
GOGOGOGO (RRRRUMBLE)
OHH?


GOGOGO
ゴゴゴ
ゴゴゴ


THE CHALICE ...IS IN HERE, HMM.


...HOLD ON. IT TROUBLES ME THAT IZUMI ISN'T BATTING AN EYELASH.
I WONDER IF THE VAULT IS RIGGED SO THAT IF IT'S NOT OPENED PROPERLY, SOMETHING WILL HAPPEN TO THE INTRUDER...
HMM ...
LIKE IF THE LOCK IS FORCED, THE FLOOR VANISHES OUT FROM UNDER YOU, OR THE STUFF INSIDE DISAPPEARS, OR YOU FIND YOURSELF TRAPPED IN A STICKY PUDDLE OF SOMETHING?

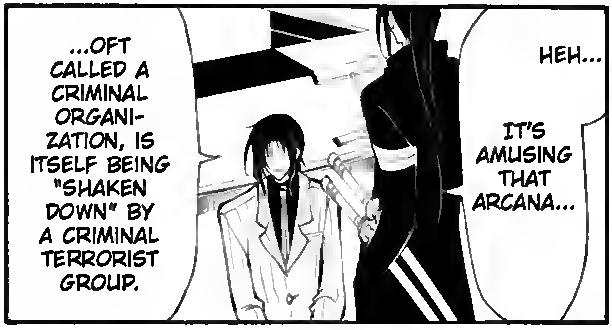

FOR A VAULT BREAK-IN, YOU'RE USUALLY LOOKING TO GET IN FROM THE SIDES, TOP, AND BOTTOM AND FIND A WEAKNESS TO THE OUTSIDE... LOOKS TOO BIG HEIGHT-WISE TO TRY FOR THE TOP...
...SO WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE US TO MAKE A HOLE?


?

...IT'D BE FINE BY US IF WHAT'S INSIDE DISAP-PEARED.
WELL ...

...WE COULD FORCE YOU TO WATCH... AS YOUR MEN ARE KILLED IN FRONT OF YOU INSTEAD.
...OH, OR...

SPEAK UP NOW IF YOU DON'T WANT TO BE TOR-TURED.
WHERE IS THE KEY THAT OPENS THIS VAULT?


...OFT CALLED A CRIMINAL ORGANI-ZATION, IS ITSELF BEING "SHAKEN DOWN" BY A CRIMINAL TERRORIST GROUP.
HEH... IT'S AMUSING THAT ARCANA...

IN FACT, I WAS JUST BEMOANING NOT MAKING ONE, SINCE IT'S A BOTHER TO HAVE TO OPEN IT MYSELF.
AS A COUNTER-MEASURE AGAINST PEOPLE LIKE YOU.
FOR YOUR INFOR-MATION, THERE IS NO KEY.

YOU'VE GOT AN HOUR.
ROUGHLY FIVE HOURS, I'D GUESS.
AT LEAST.
...KIKU-SAKA...
...HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO REMOVE THE SPELL AND OPEN IT?
LET ME MAKE SOMETHING ABSOLUTELY CLEAR.
—AND YOU...
...LUMP US TOGETHER WITH YOU HYENAS WHO SWARM AROUND DIVINE POWER.
DO NOT...
GA (STOMP)
...IS NOT TO COLLECT GOD'S RELICS...
KAMU-HABU-RI'S MIS-SION...

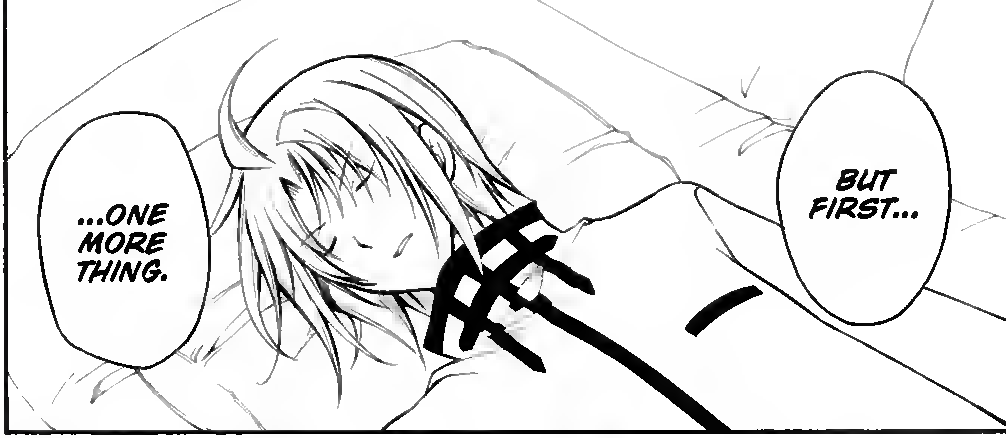
AND...
...TO STOP THOSE WITHOUT THE RIGHT TO POSSESS THEM, LIKE YOU, FROM DOING SO.

PREPARE TO UNDO THE SPELL.
...BUT TO PROTECT THEM... OR...
...TO DESTROY THOSE THAT HOLD TOO MUCH POWER.

REMEMBER THAT UNTO YOUR DEATH.
THAT IS KAMUHABURI.

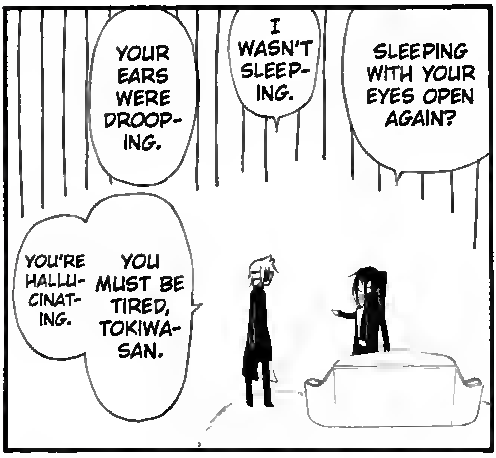
UNTIL THE NEXT GOD IS DETERMINED...
...WE MANAGE THE CRUSADE AND DIVINE POWER IN THIS GODLESS WORLD.

...WE KNOW WHERE THE CHALICE IS.
IF HE HASN'T GOT THE KEY, I'M THROUGH WITH HIM.
TAKE HIM AWAY.
TOKIWA-SAN...
...ICHIKAWA WANTS TO KNOW IF IT'S ALL RIGHT TO JUST LET THE GOD CANDIDATE BE?
HE'S A GOD CANDIDATE WHO HAS DECIPHERED A PROPHECY BOOK.
KATSU
KATSU (TAKO)
OUR TASK WILL BE MADE EASIER IF HE REMAINS IN OUR KEEPING.
IDIOT!
OF COURSE IT'S NOT!
BAN (SLAM)
KEEP HIM SECURE AND ISOLATED UNTIL WE LEAVE ARCANA...
...AND MAKE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN HE DOESN'T WAKE UP!
WATCH HIM WITH CARE!
...AH.

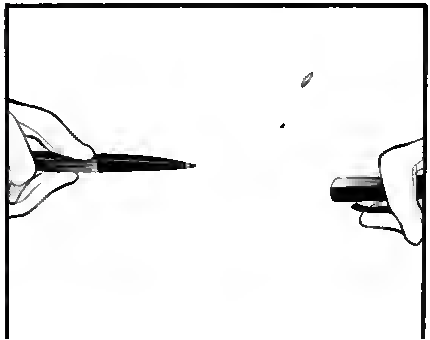

BUT FIRST...
...ONE MORE THING.

A WRITING IMPLE-MENT, ICHI-KAWA.

.....
NO...
...NOT THAT...

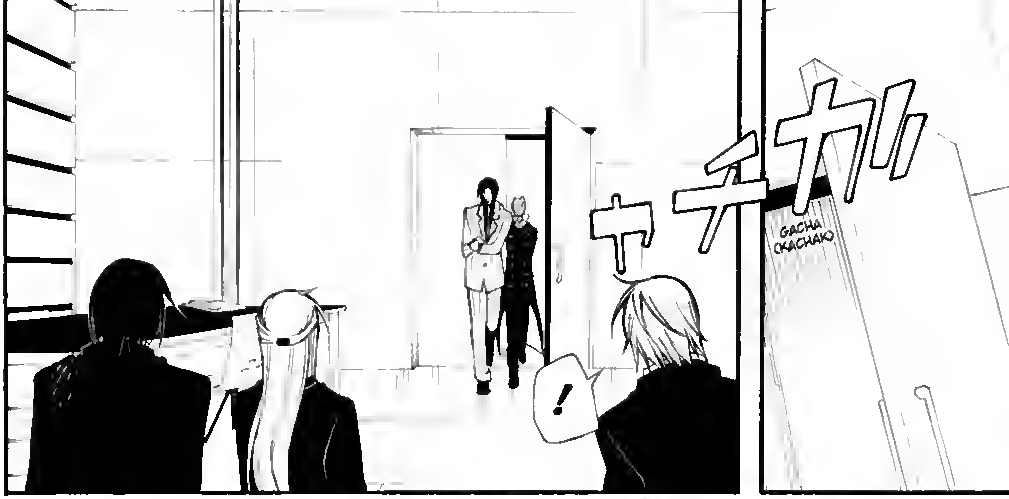

YOUR EARS WERE DROOP-ING.
I WASN'T SLEEP-ING.
SLEEPING WITH YOUR EYES OPEN AGAIN?
YOU'RE HALLU-CINAT-ING.
YOU MUST BE TIRED, TOKIWA-SAN.

ICHI-KAWA!
NYOKI (PERK)



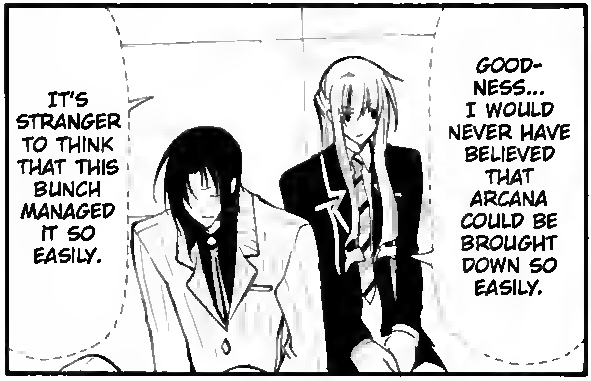
... NEVER MIND.
HAND ME A PEN.
HERE.

DON CTA-DAA
FOREHEAD: ANATMAN / CHEEK: I'M AWAKE.
NI GRIND
—AAH... THE INK FLOWS WELL TODAY.
A MASTER-PIECE, IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF.
BFFT!
YOU THINK SO? I THINK IT'S TOO CROWDED.
OH!
MAKE SURE YOU'RE KEEPING AN EYE ON THE HOS-TAGES IN WITH THE ARCANA BOSS, TOKIWA-SAN.
HAAH...
I'M GONNA GO OPEN THE VAULT.
ER, I MEANT THE OPPO-SITE...
THEN LET ME ADD EYEBROWS TOO.
SINCE...
...THEY SEEM ESPE-CIALLY...
...REBEL-LIOUS.

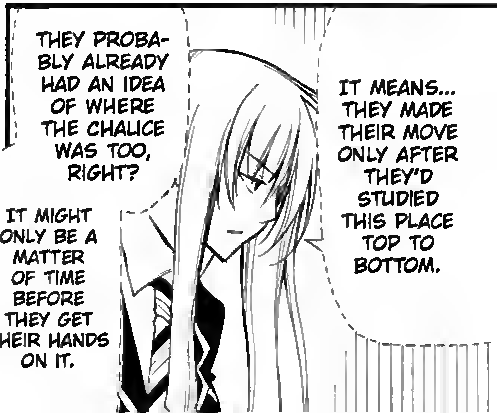

ガチャ
GACHA
(KACHAK)
!

AND IT SEEMS THE OTHER RELICS HAVE ALREADY BEEN TAKEN.
...THE VAULT CONTAIN-ING THE CHALICE HAS BEEN FOUND.

YOUR EXCEL-LENCY!

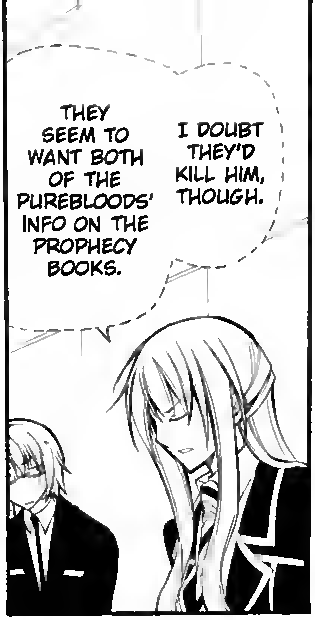

IT'S STRANGER TO THINK THAT THIS BUNCH MANAGED IT SO EASILY.
GOOD-NESS... I WOULD NEVER HAVE BELIEVED THAT ARCANA COULD BE BROUGHT DOWN SO EASILY.

FROM UNDER THEIR NOSES...? IT WON'T BE EASY.
WE CAN STRIKE BACK IN THAT TIME—
BUT THAT VAULT WILL TAKE THEM FIVE HOURS TO OPEN.

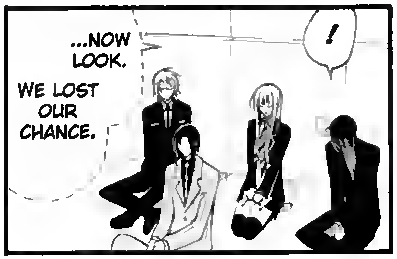

THEY PROBA-BLY ALREADY HAD AN IDEA OF WHERE THE CHALICE WAS TOO, RIGHT?
IT MIGHT ONLY BE A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THEY GET THEIR HANDS ON IT.
IT MEANS... THEY MADE THEIR MOVE ONLY AFTER THEY'D STUDIED THIS PLACE TOP TO BOTTOM.

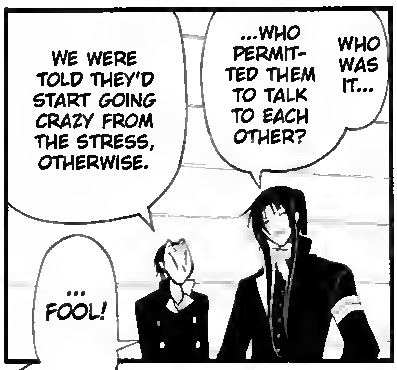
WHAT'S THE ENEMY'S MOTIVE?
TO MANAGE THE CRUSADE AND DIVINE POWER, SUPPOSEDLY...HOW RIDICULOUS.
—WE'RE BEING KEPT ALIVE FOR NOW, BUT...
...IF THEY OBTAIN THE CHALICE, WE'LL PROBABLY BE KILLED.
.....
... HEY.
THERE ARE ONLY THREE LACKEYS IN THE ROOM RIGHT NOW.
THAT GUY TOKIWA TOOK OFF...
...AND THE OTHER TWO WITHOUT MASKS AREN'T AROUND ...
ISN'T THIS OUR CHANCE?
PARI (CRACKLE)
I MEAN, THEY'VE GOT GUNS, WHICH COULD MAKE THINGS TOUGH, BUT I THINK WE'VE GOT THE NUMBERS TO TAKE THEM.
THEN WE CAN USE THAT OPPORTUNITY TO—
!
IF WE FAIL TO KILL EVEN ONE OF THEM...
...WHO KNOWS WHAT THEY'LL DO TO TSUZUKI, WHEREVER THEY'VE STASHED HIM.

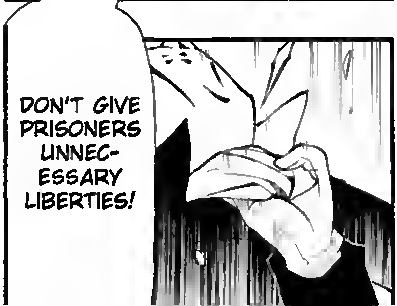
AND THAT WOULD BE A PROB-LEM.
...I'D WAGER MY EMPLOYEES WHO ARE DETAINED SOMEWHERE IN THE BUILDING WILL BE IN DANGER.
EVEN IF TSU-ZUKI IS KEPT SAFE ...


THEY SEEM TO WANT BOTH OF THE PUREBLOODS' INFO ON THE PROPHECY BOOKS.
I DOUBT THEY'D KILL HIM, THOUGH.

—WHAT HAVE WE HERE?


...NOW LOOK.
WE LOST OUR CHANCE.
!

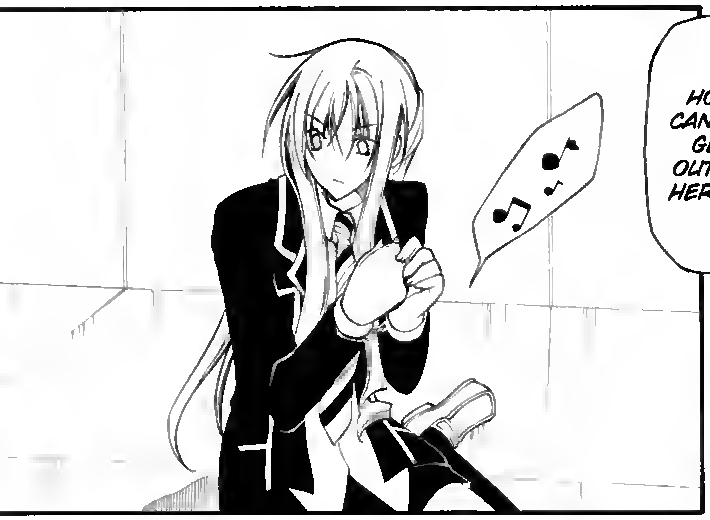

WE WERE TOLD THEY'D START GOING CRAZY FROM THE STRESS, OTHERWISE.
...WHO PERMIT-TED THEM TO TALK TO EACH OTHER?
WHO WAS IT...
... FOOL!

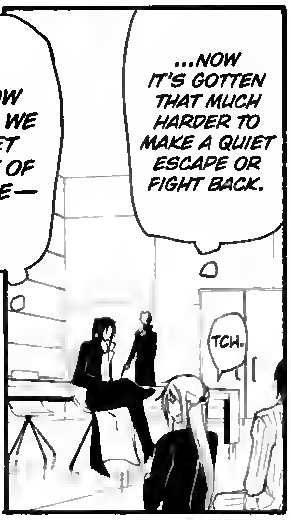

DON'T GIVE PRISONERS UNNEC-ESSARY LIBERTIES!

KA GKLAK
WHISPER-ING AND CONSPIR-ING, ARE WE...
...MY PRISON-ERS?

GEEZ.
GATA OKLATTERO
ガタ

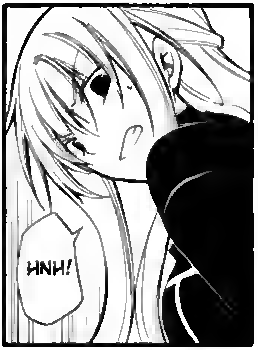
UNH...
PLEASE FORGIVE ME.
YOU THREE...
FIVE STRAIGHT HOURS OF LECTURING WHEN WE GET BACK!

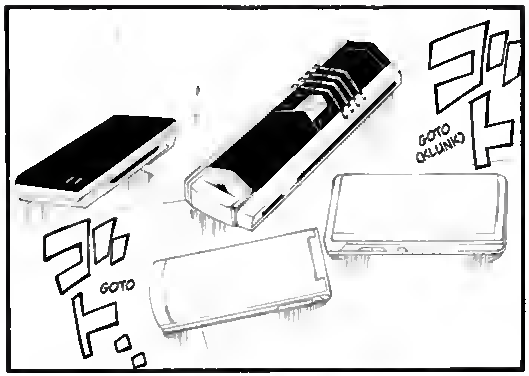

HOW CAN WE GET OUT OF HERE—


...NOW IT'S GOTTEN THAT MUCH HARDER TO MAKE A QUIET ESCAPE OR FIGHT BACK.
TCH.

REJOICE.
YOU NOW HAVE AN OVERNIGHT LECTURE TO LOOK FORWARD TO.
EEP!
YOU... DIDN'T EVEN CONFISCATE THEIR CELLS?

...!

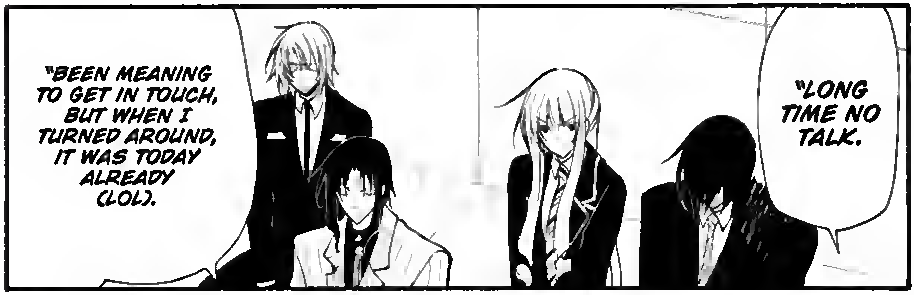

HNH!


ゴト
GOTO
GOTO
GOTO
ゴト。

HAND OVER YOUR CELL PHONES.
...
ALL FOUR OF YOU.

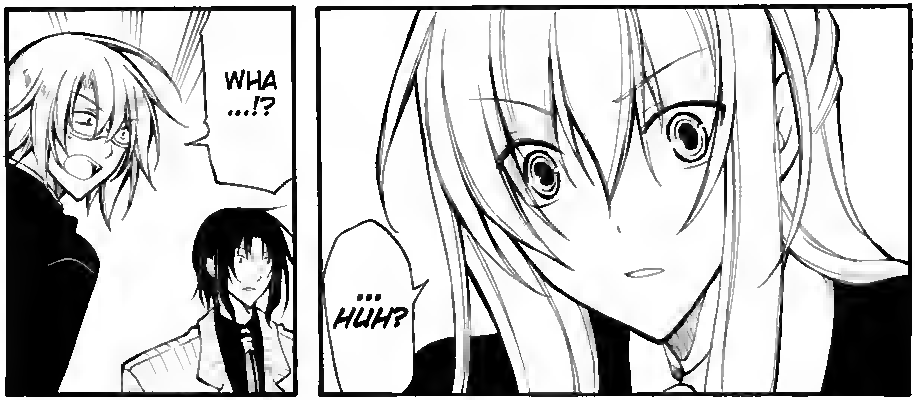
HUH... IT'S A COMPLETELY HARMLESS, TRIVIAL E-MAIL.
.....HEH...

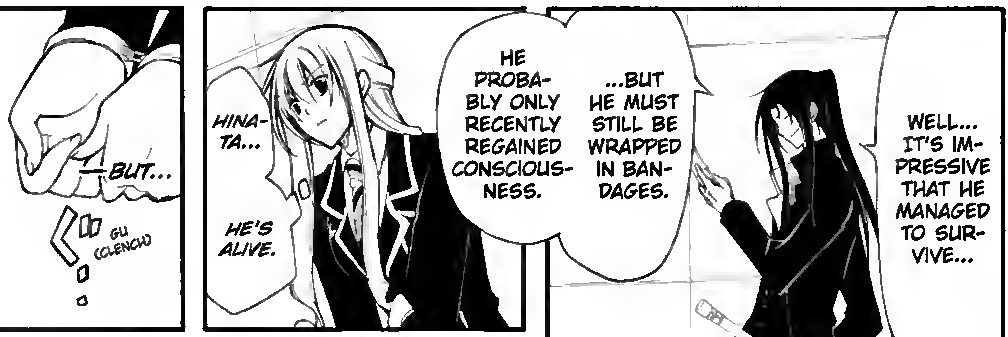
SO THAT WAS AN E-MAIL ALERT, HMM.

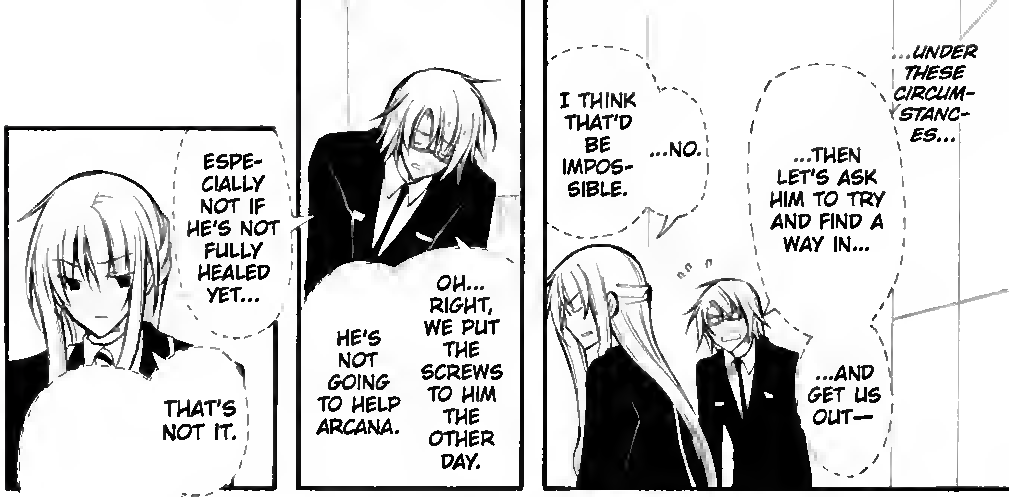

"BEEN MEANING TO GET IN TOUCH, BUT WHEN I TURNED AROUND, IT WAS TODAY ALREADY (LOL).
"LONG TIME NO TALK.

"HOPE YOU DON'T MIND ME ASKING."
"I WANTED TO ASK YOU IF YOU HAD ANY PLANS FOR TONIGHT.

—"HINATA."


WHA...!?
...HUH?


...BUT...
GU (CLENCH)
HINATA...
HE'S ALIVE.
HE PROBABLY ONLY RECENTLY REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS.
...BUT HE MUST STILL BE WRAPPED IN BANDAGES.
WELL... IT'S IMPRESSIVE THAT HE MANAGED TO SURVIVE...


...UNDER THESE CIRCUM-STANC-ES...
...THEN LET'S ASK HIM TO TRY AND FIND A WAY IN...
...AND GET US OUT—
I THINK THAT'D BE IMPOS-SIBLE.
...NO.
OH... RIGHT, WE PUT THE SCREWS TO HIM THE OTHER DAY.
HE'S NOT GOING TO HELP ARCANA.
ESPE-CIALLY NOT IF HE'S NOT FULLY HEALED YET...
THAT'S NOT IT.

WITH OUR CELLS CONFIS-CATED...
...WE HAVE NO WAY TO ASK HINATA FOR HELP TO BEGIN WITH.

GURA CLURCH

HEH!

BOTA
BOTA (DRIP)

.....!

...HE'S IN A LOT OF PAIN FROM WHERE YOU SHOT HIM.
CAN'T YOU AT LEAST STOP THE BLEED-ING?

... YOU MUST BE JOK-ING.
HE SHOT AND KILLED QUITE A FEW OF MY MEN.

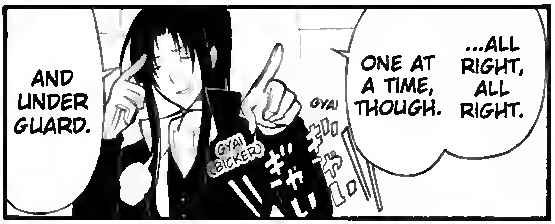
...IT MIGHT BE IN OUR BEST INTERESTS TO KEEP HANAMURA ALIVE SO THAT WE CAN CONTROL TSUZUKI.
...HOWEVER...
WELL, EITHER WAY...
...LEAVING HIM ANOTHER HOUR SHOULDN'T KILL HIM.
...C-COULD WE BE ALLOWED A BATHROOM BREAK?
I'M AT MY LIMIT.
...HEY.
OZU (WAVER)
UM...
...MAKINO-KUN...
...COMMON COURTESY DICTATES "LADIES FIRST."
ESPECIALLY SINCE I DOUBT THEY'LL LET US ALL GO AT THE SAME TIME.

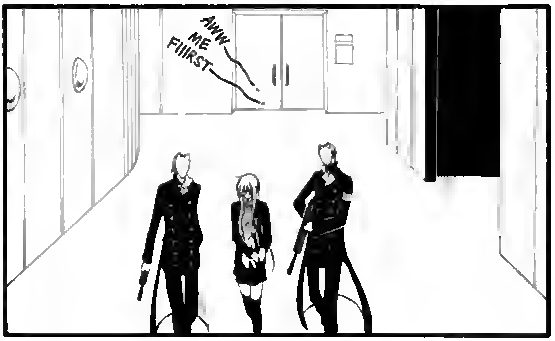
SO YIELD TO THE LADY.

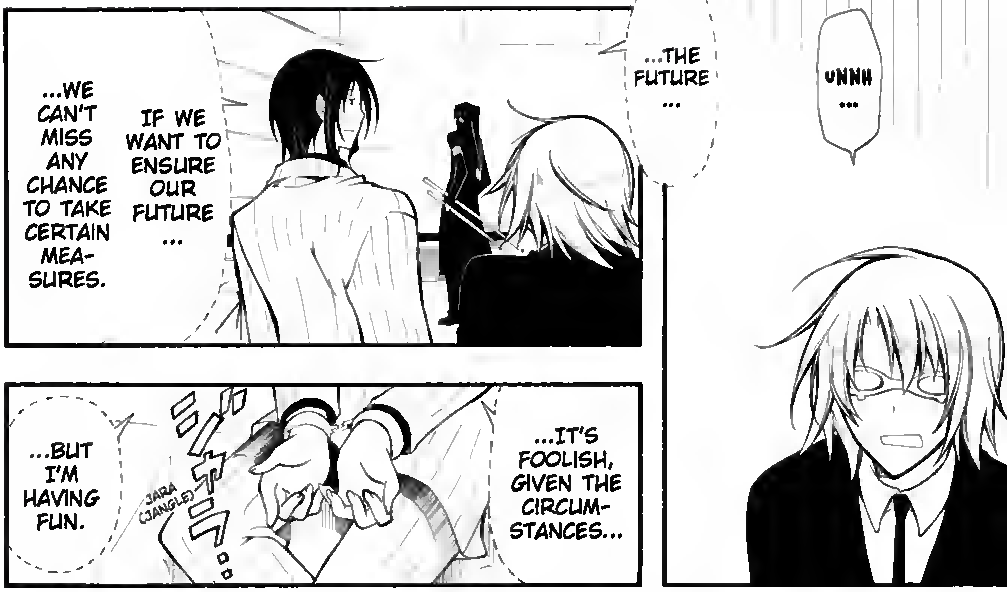
BUT I THINK I'M MUCH CLOSER TO HAVING AN ACCIDENT...
WILL YOU SHUT UP!?
THESE THINGS ARE REALLY HARD ON A GIRL!!

...AH, WHAT A GENTLE-MAN.
I'M SO GRATE-FUL.
.....

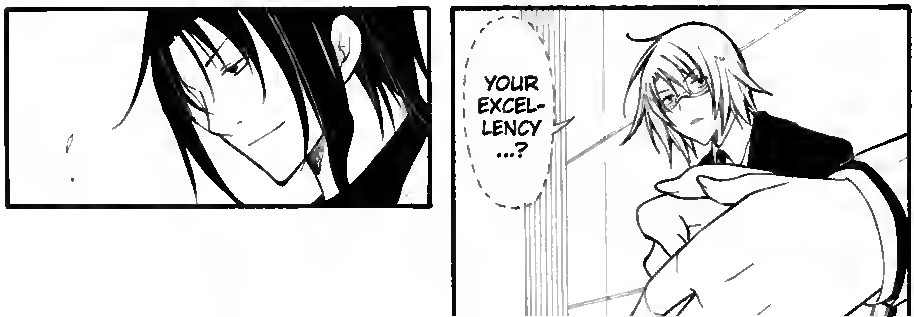
KYU (PRESS)

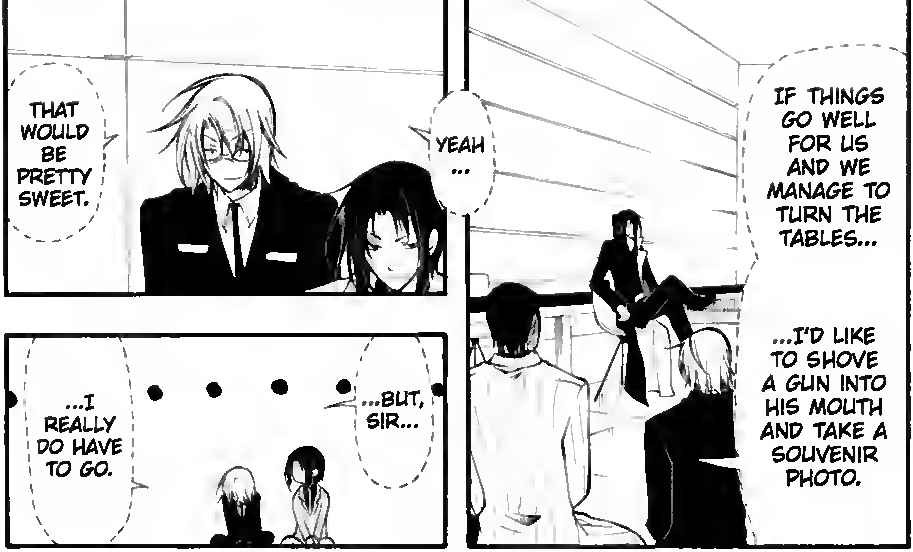

...ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT.
ONE AT A TIME, THOUGH.
GYA!
GYA! (CLICKS)
AND UNDER GUARD.

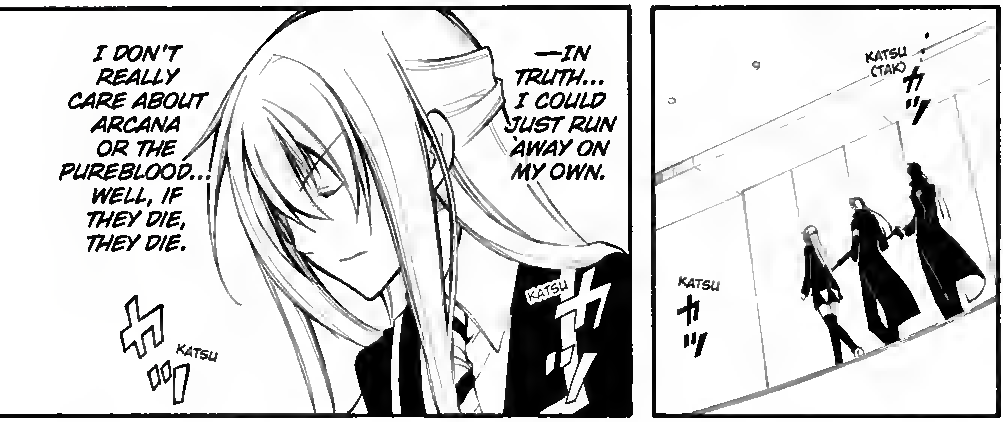

AWW ME FIIIRST


UNNH ...
...THE FUTURE ...
IF WE WANT TO ENSURE OUR FUTURE ...
...WE CAN'T MISS ANY CHANCE TO TAKE CERTAIN MEASURES.
...IT'S FOOLISH, GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES...
JARA (JANGLE)
...BUT I'M HAVING FUN.

I'D NEVER HAVE GUESSED THAT FINDING MYSELF IN SUCH A SITUATION...
...SCRABBLING FOR SURVIVAL, WOULD BE SO STIMULATING.


YOUR EXCELLENCY ...?

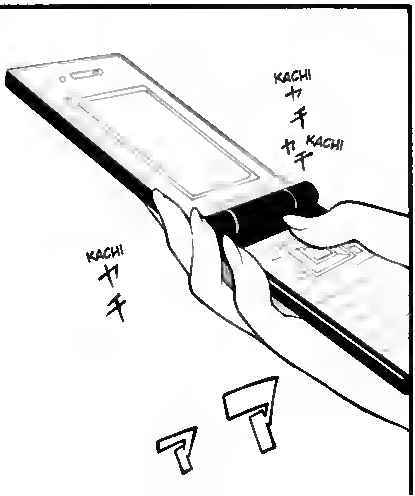

THAT WOULD BE PRETTY SWEET.
YEAH...
IF THINGS GO WELL FOR US AND WE MANAGE TO TURN THE TABLES...
...I'D LIKE TO SHOVE A GUN INTO HIS MOUTH AND TAKE A SOUVENIR PHOTO.
...I REALLY DO HAVE TO GO.
...BUT, SIR...


I DON'T REALLY CARE ABOUT ARCANA OR THE PUREBLOOD... WELL, IF THEY DIE, THEY DIE.
—IN TRUTH... I COULD JUST RUN AWAY ON MY OWN.
KATSU
KATSU
KATSU (TAK)
KATSU

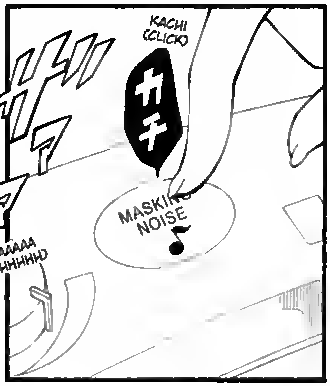
Ladies
BUT—
KATSU

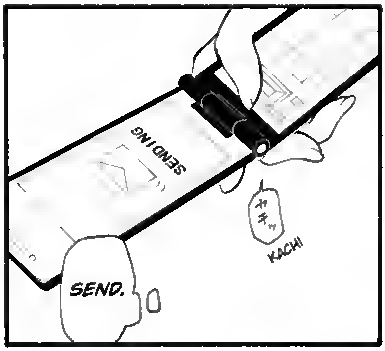
SHALL WE GO IN...?
!
ZA (SHFD)
?
WE'RE SUPPOSED TO STAND GUARD, SEE?
DON'T WORRY, WE WON'T ENTER THE STALL WITH YOU...
YOU'RE NOT FOLLOW-ING ME IN, ARE YOU?
... HOLD ON.
GA (BAM)
AS MEN... NO, AS HUMANS, YOU'RE NOT TO CROSS THIS ETIQUETTE BOUNDARY!
YOU'RE THE WORST.
... TCH!

...FINE.
I'LL LET YOU COME IN WITH ME, BUT ONLY AS ANIMALS, NOT HUMANS.
NOW, THEN ...
...DON'T OVER-STEP YOUR-SELVES AND USE HUMAN SPEECH.
YOU SHOULD GRUNT INSTEAD ...
... SWINE.
GO
GO (CRUMB)...
EEK!


KACHI
KACHI
KACHI

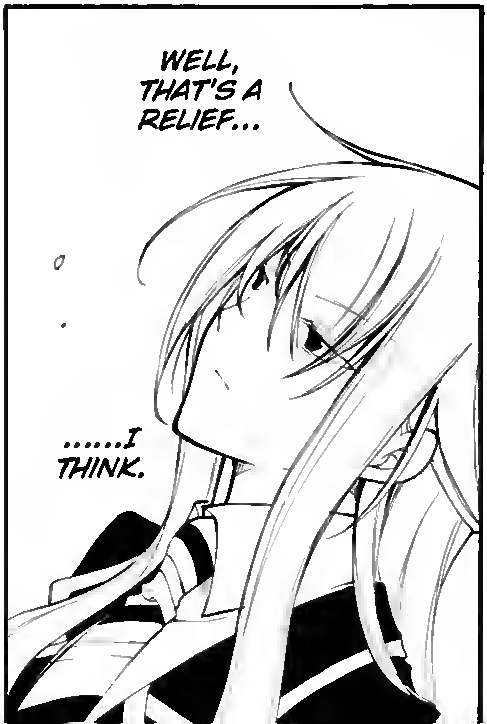
UUH, UUH TOKIWA-SAN'S GONNA KILL US
TYRANT


KACHI (CLICK)
MASKING NOISE
ZAAAAAA (PSHHHHH)

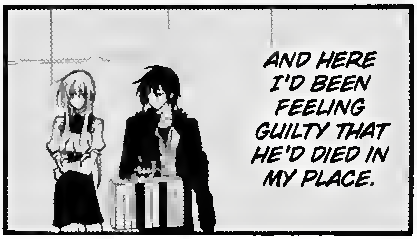

SENDING
SEND.
KACHI

"ARCANA TAKEN OVER BY THUGS.
"TSUZUKI, IZUMI, AND THE REST TAKEN HOSTAGE AND IN A BIND. MIND LENDING A HAND?"
ZAAAAA (FSHHHH)
KACHI
KACHI
KACHI (CLICK)

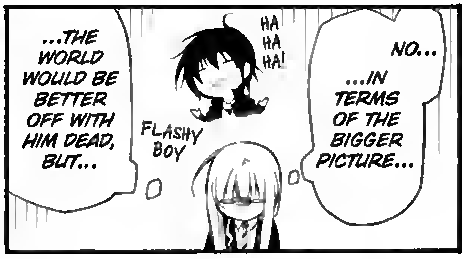
HAAH...
TON (TMP)

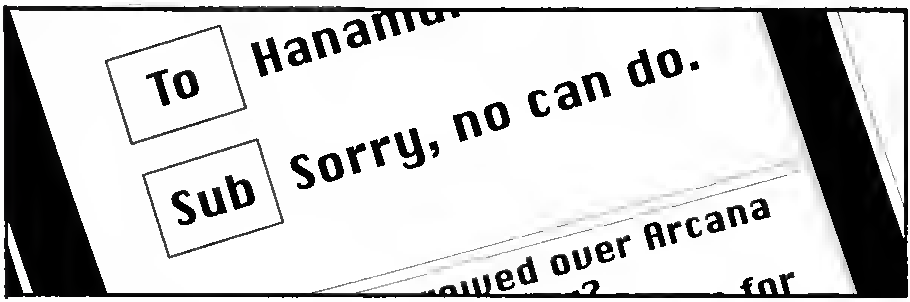

WELL, THAT'S A RELIEF...
.....I THINK.

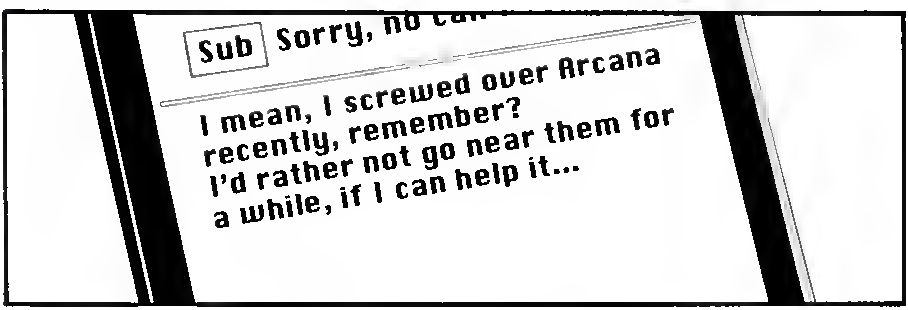
...SO HE MADE IT, HUH.

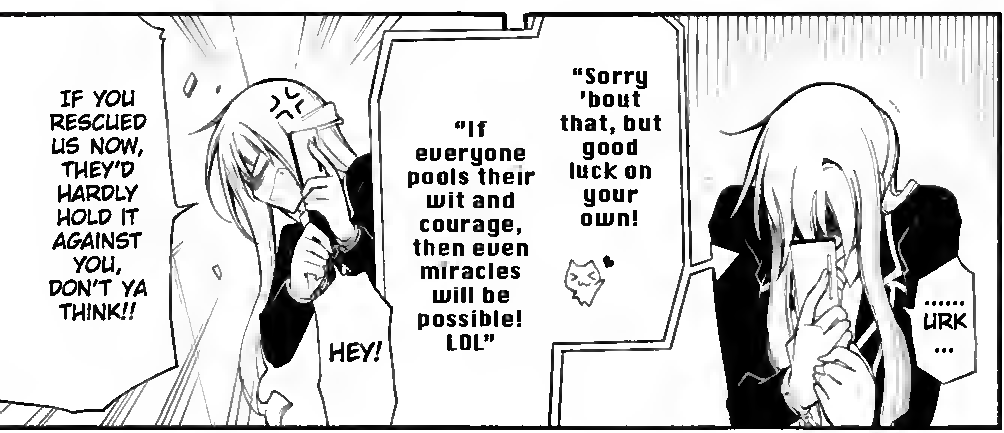

AND HERE I'D BEEN FEELING GUILTY THAT HE'D DIED IN MY PLACE.

VUVUVU (VRRRR)
!!!
?!
?!
?!
!
A REPLY.

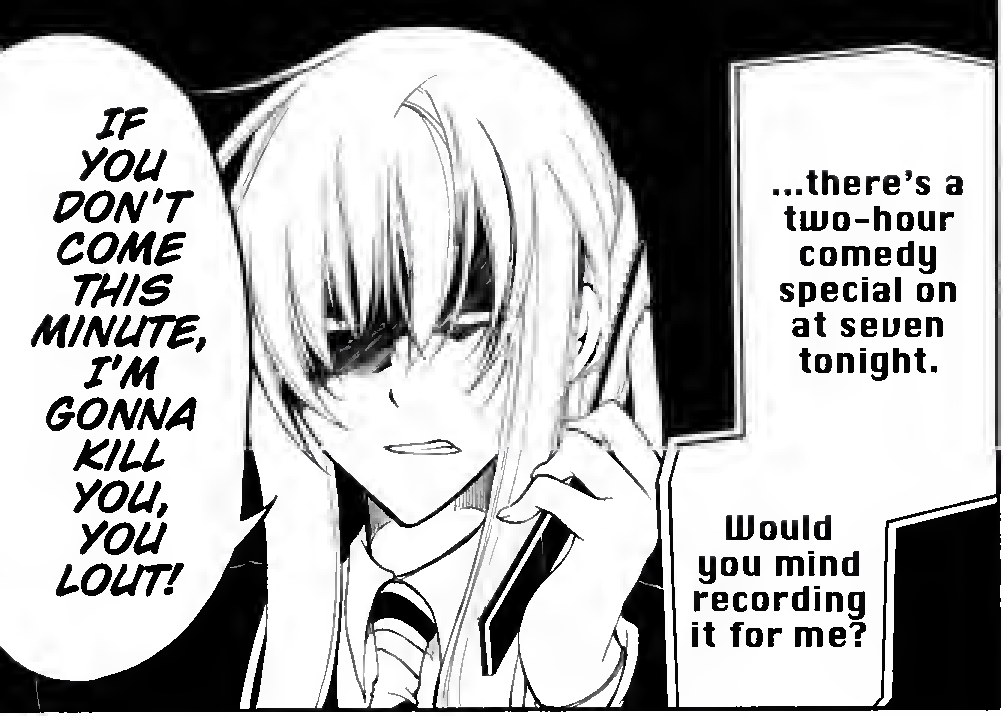

...THE WORLD WOULD BE BETTER OFF WITH HIM DEAD, BUT...
HA HA HA!
FLASHY BOY
NO... ...IN TERMS OF THE BIGGER PICTURE...

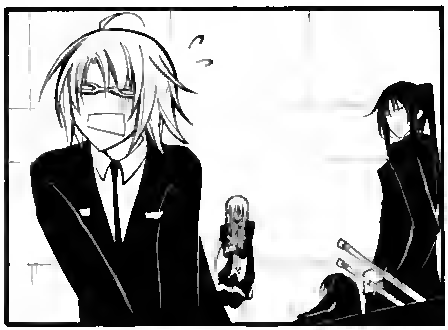

To
Sub Sorry, no can do.
over Arcana

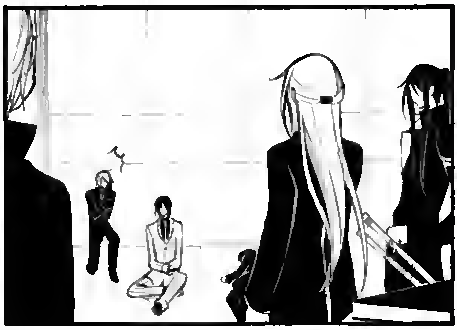

Sub
I mean, I screwed over Arcana recently, remember? I'd rather not go near them for a while, if I can help it...


IF YOU RESCUED US NOW, THEY'D HARDLY HOLD IT AGAINST YOU, DON'T YA THINK!!
HEY!
"If everyone pools their wit and courage, then even miracles will be possible! LOL"
"Sorry 'bout that, but good luck on your own!
..... URK ...

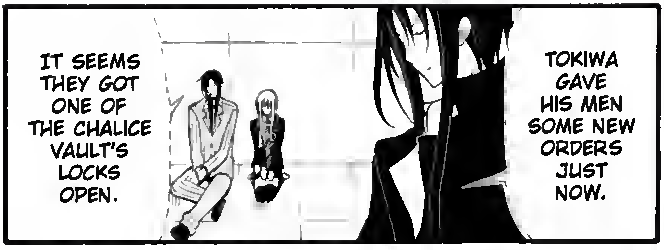
!
HEY! WHO'RE YOU TALKING TO!?
...GH!
THESE HANDCUFFS ARE PISSING ME OFF AND I SHOUTED OUT, OKAY!?
...H...
...HELLO !?
Ah, yes, yes, I can hear you.
I UNDER-STAND, BUT CAN'T YOU PLEASE—
Ohhhh, owww, it hurts.
My stab wounds haven't fully closed yet, see?
Well... I mean, it's like this.
CONNECTED
...Oh, the reason I contacted you in the first place is...
Wah, seri-ously, my gut hurts. Ahh... And I'm super tired.
BUT WE'RE ABOUT TO BE KILLED! HELP US!
HEY!


IF YOU DON'T COME THIS MINUTE, I'M GONNA KILL YOU, YOU LOUT!
...there's a two-hour comedy special on at seven tonight.
Would you mind recording it for me?

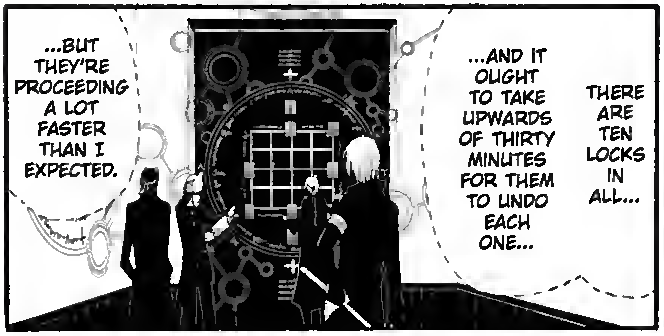


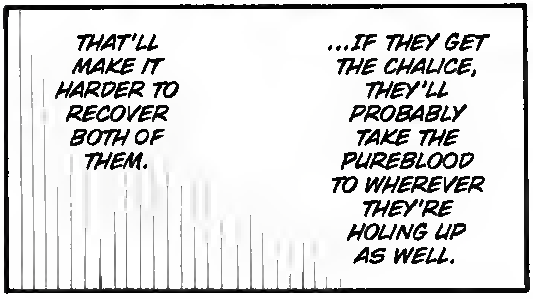


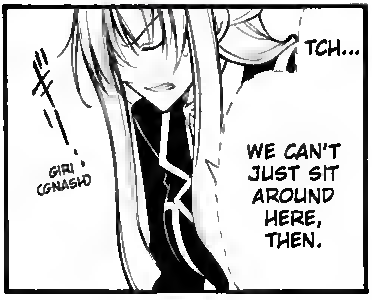
I CURSE THE CIRCUM-STANCES THAT FORCE US TO SEEK HELP FROM THAT UNRELIABLE MAN.
I CAN'T TELL... I'M NOT SURE I GOT THROUGH TO HIM.
HOW DID IT GO?

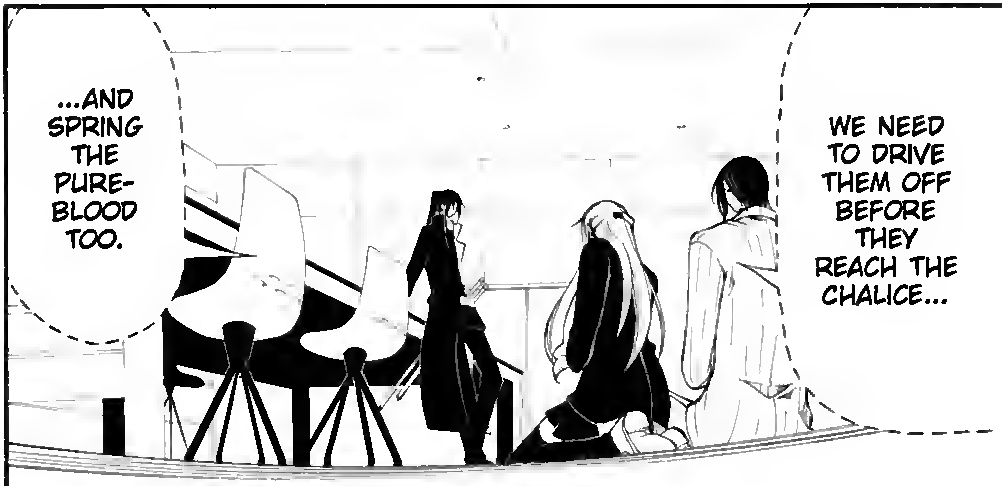

IT SEEMS THEY GOT ONE OF THE CHALICE VAULT'S LOCKS OPEN.
TOKIWA GAVE HIS MEN SOME NEW ORDERS JUST NOW.

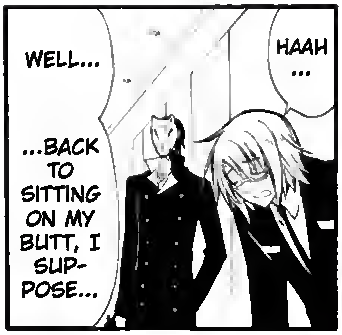
MORE BAD NEWS...

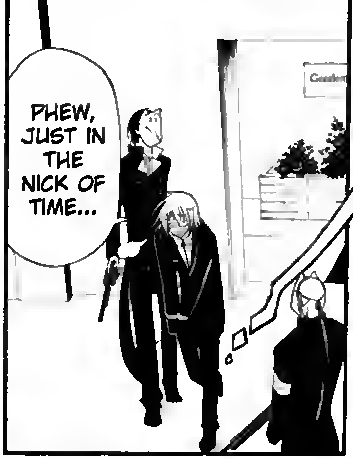

...BUT THEY'RE PROCEEDING A LOT FASTER THAN I EXPECTED.
...AND IT OUGHT TO TAKE UPWARDS OF THIRTY MINUTES FOR THEM TO UNDO EACH ONE...
THERE ARE TEN LOCKS IN ALL...


THAT'LL MAKE IT HARDER TO RECOVER BOTH OF THEM.
...IF THEY GET THE CHALICE, THEY'LL PROBABLY TAKE THE PUREBLOOD TO WHEREVER THEY'RE HOLING UP AS WELL.

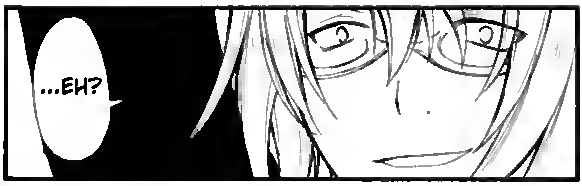

TCH...
GIRI (GNASH)
WE CAN'T JUST SIT AROUND HERE, THEN.


...AND SPRING THE PURE-BLOOD TOO.
WE NEED TO DRIVE THEM OFF BEFORE THEY REACH THE CHALICE...


WELL...
...BACK TO SITTING ON MY BUTT, I SUP-POSE...
HAAH...


PHEW, JUST IN THE NICK OF TIME...
JAAAA (FLUSHHH)
Gentlemen

AHH...
MY BUNS ARE SORE.

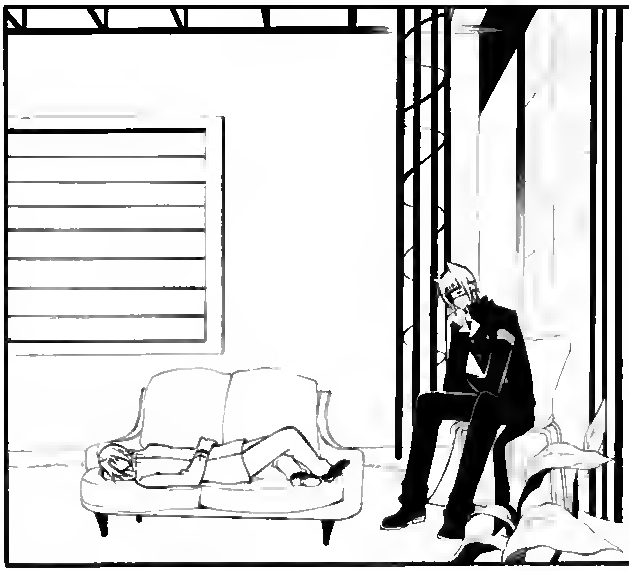

...EH?

YOU...!
WHAT'D YOU DO!?
EH!?
SA (CHAK)

WHERE'S YOUR PARTNER?
HUH...?

M-ME!?
DID I DO SOME-THING!?

黒執事



KYUPO (SQUIK)
キュポ..

THERE'S STILL SOME-THING MISSING.
...HE WAS RIGHT.

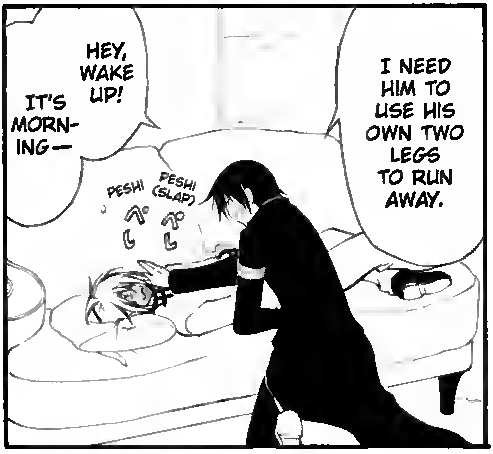
.....

WE CAN'T CONTAIN THEM ON OUR OWN. COULD YOU GIVE US A HAND, SIR?
THE PRISONERS ARE FIGHTING BACK!
BAN (BAM)
CAP'N!
.....
ALL RIGHT... YOU WATCH HIM IN MY STEAD, THEN.
BFFT!!
SURE, BUT...
YIKES ---
PURU
PURU (TRMBL)
I CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT THEY'VE DONE TO HIS FACE!

IF YOU HAD ANY DIGNITY, IT'D BE GONE NOW.

...NOW, THEN...
HEH HEH.
I'M GONNA HAVE TO WAKE HIM UP FIRST.

PESHI
PESHI
PESHI
HEYYY!
ARE YOU LISTEN-ING, YOU—

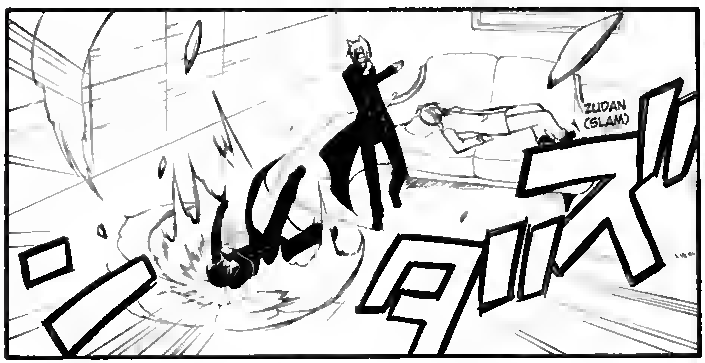

I NEED HIM TO USE HIS OWN TWO LEGS TO RUN AWAY.
HEY, WAKE UP!
IT'S MORN-ING—
PESHI
PESHI (SLAP)

HEYYY!!
HEYYY!!

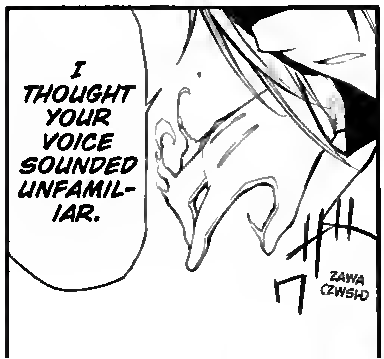
I SAID, WAKE UP! KING OF FOOLS!!
GAKKUN (SHAKE)
GAKKUN
HE AIN'T RE-SPONDING AT ALL! DAMMIT!
HEY, WAKE UP!
GAKKUN

.....HMPH.
IRA (IRK)
イラ・

HEY.


ZUDAN (SLAM)

HUH ...?
GAKUN (YANK)

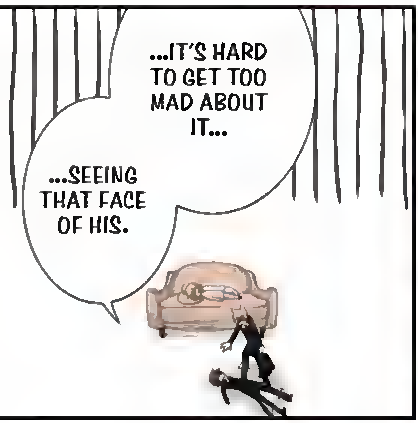

I THOUGHT YOUR VOICE SOUNDED UNFAMILIAR.
ZAWA (CRWSH)

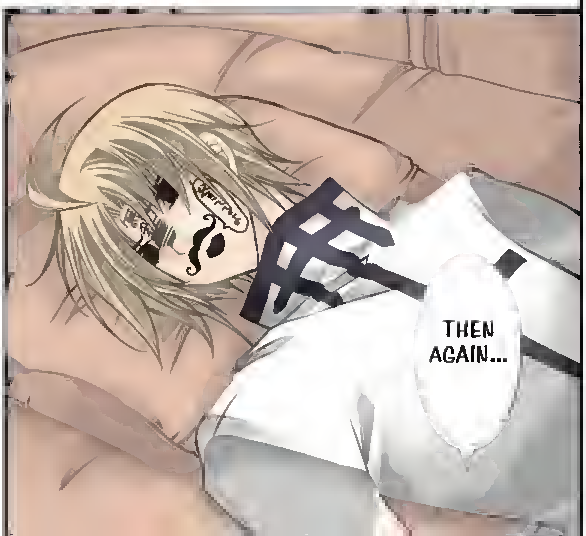
GU (STOMP)
UNH ...!

WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
WHOA!
SEE... I KNEW THIS WASN'T GONNA BE A WALK IN THE PARK.
THAT'S WHY I TOLD HER I DIDN'T WANNA COME.

BLOODY CROSS

SEE... I KNEW THIS WASN'T GONNA BE A WALK IN THE PARK.
THAT'S WHY I TOLD HER I DIDN'T WANNA COME.


...IT'S HARD TO GET TOO MAD ABOUT IT...
...SEEING THAT FACE OF HIS.


THEN AGAIN...

TOKIWA
CRUSADE
purebloood
god candid
KUKI
MAKINO
IZUMI
a vampire
curse
Chapter 26
The Sought Object

a vampire

curse

ISUKI KUROSAKI

MAKINO IZUMI

KUKI

Chapter 26

# The Sought Object

BLOODY CROSS

WHAT THE ...!?
GACHA GACHA
WHAT'S GOING ON...
...CAP-TAIN?
...AN INTRUDER SLIPPED IN DRESSED AS ONE OF US.
GO REPORT TO TOKIWA-SAN.
YES, SIR.
BO (BWP)
TCH.
IF THEY TELL THE BOSS I'M HERE...
...I'LL HAVE COME ALL THIS WAY FOR NOTHING!!
BIND !!
!?
VUN (VWOOM)
...NH!
YOU...

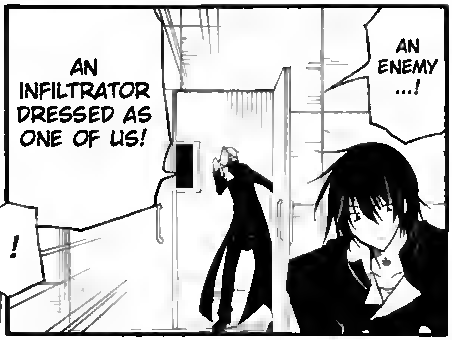
DO (BOOM)

SOAR AWAY.
HEAVY BLOW.
(WHOOSH)

UNNH... BUT I MIGHT'VE REOPENED SOME WOUNDS...
MY GUT HURTS.
ZUKI
ZUKI
ZUKI
ZUKI
ZUKI (THROB)

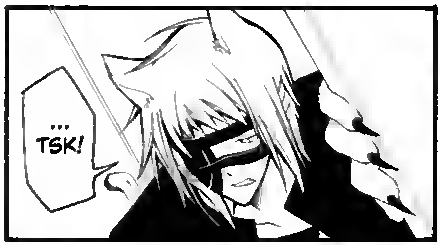
HEH...
DON'T UNDER-ESTI-MATE ME.
I'M NOT IN TOP FORM, BUT I CAN STILL—

I BETTER WAKE THE PURE-BLOOD ASAP AND...
DAM-MIT...
THERE WAS ONE MORE!


AN INFILTRATOR DRESSED AS ONE OF US!
AN ENEMY ...!

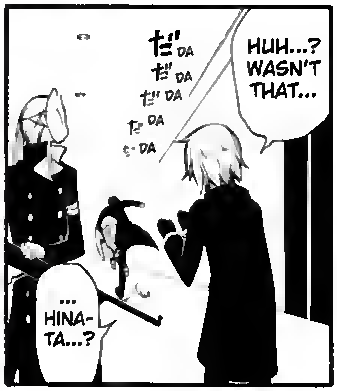
...GO IN DEEPER—
OW ...
TO POSE AS KAMU-HABURI... YOU MUST NOT VALUE YOUR LIFE.
GA
CHA
YOU'LL WANT TO GET RID OF ANY MIRRORS AFTER THIS.
HUH...? DID MY ATTACK NOT WORK ON YOU AT ALL?
YOU WENT THROUGH A WALL, AND YOU'RE STILL FINE.
...HA HA, I SEE...
YOU'RE A REAL TOUGH BASTARD, HUH.
AHHH ...
WELL ...

DASSHU (DASH)
IN THAT CASE...!


...TSK!

NO THANK YOU!
TAKING ON A MUSCLY GUY LIKE THAT ONE-ON-ONE?

DA (TMP)
I REALLY DIDN'T DO ANY-THING...
HUH?
NO, I SWEAR!


DA
HUH...? WASN'T THAT...
...HINA-TA...?

BYU (WISH)

I CAN'T MOVE WELL AT ALL HAULING THIS DEAD-WEIGHT AROUND !!
... DAM-MIT ...
SHUBA (SHFFL)
BA
BA

RESCUE ME!!
HEY!
MAYBE NEXT TIME!!
OH... SORRY!

DON (BLAM)
DON
DON

ARCANA MEM-BERS...
!

AND TRY NOT TO HIT THE GOD CANDI-DATE!
SEIZE HIM!
HE'S THE CRONY WHO GOT AWAY A LITTLE WHILE AGO!
GEH!
AH! THAT'S HIM!
THE ENEMY WHO TRIED TO PASS AS ONE OF US!

VLIN (WHIP)
RE-VERSE MOVE-MENT!!
GEEZ... WHAT A PAIN! DENY ATTAIN-MENT!!

UNH!!
WAH!
BON (BOOF)

KURU (WHIRL)
ZUPO (PWUP)
HUH?

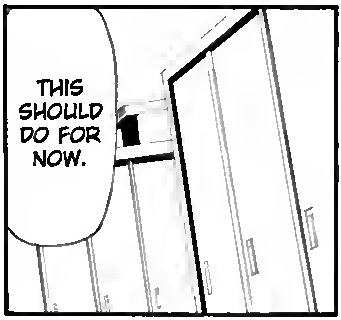
WAAA (CLAMOR)
WAAA
WAAA
BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW.
THEN LET'S BEAT THEM UP.

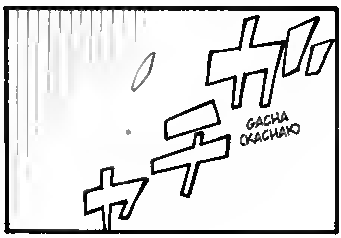
HOW...

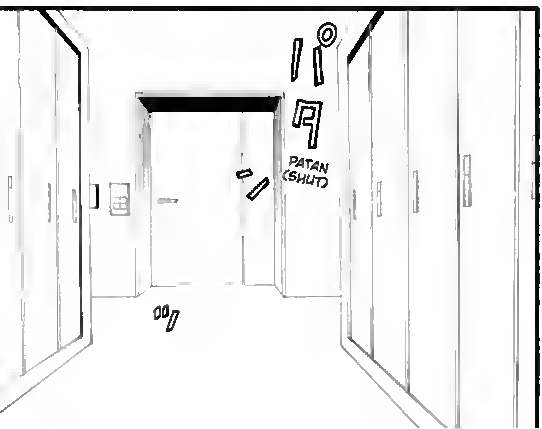
LET'S TIE THEM UP SHAME-FULLY, BONDAGE-STYLE!
GASHI (CHG)
I'LL BEAT YOUR HEAD IN!
DIE!
...DARE YOU PUSH US AROUND...
...BAS-TARD!
DOGO (DSH)
GO GET SOME ROPE!
BAKI (CRAK)
GESHI (STMP)
GO (WHAM)

...
WHEW.
LOCKER ROOM

YOU'RE CRAMPING MY STYLE.
SLEEP HERE IF YOU'RE NOT GONNA WAKE UP.


THIS SHOULD DO FOR NOW.


GACHA (KACHAK)

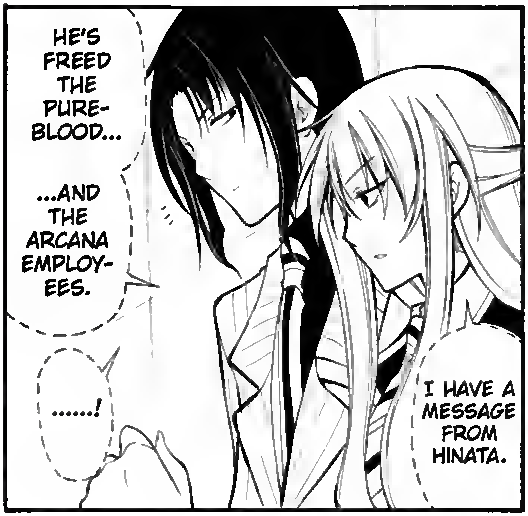

PATAN (SHUT)

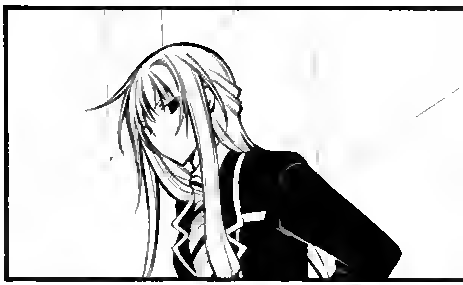
I PRAY THAT YOU'RE NOT FOUND.
PAN
PAN (CLAP)

...BAD NEWS!
ガチャ
GACHA
OKACHAIO

...AND...
...SO...

TCH.
GIVE ME THE DETAILS OUTSIDE.


I HAVE A MESSAGE FROM HINATA.
.....!
...AND THE ARCANA EMPLOY-EES.
HE'S FREED THE PURE-BLOOD...



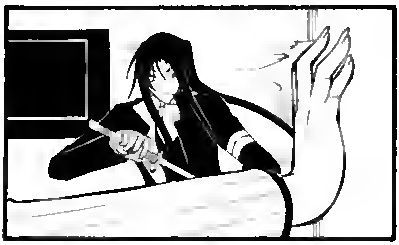
...!

I SEE.
WE'LL NEED TO FIND SOME WAY TO THANK HIM.
ALL THAT'S LEFT...
...IS TO DEFEND THE CHALICE VAULT INSIDE YOUR OFFICE, RIGHT?
...BUT SO LONG AS TOKIWA IS HERE, I DON'T THINK WE'LL BE ABLE TO LEAVE THIS ROOM.
YOU GO BACK THEM UP.
I CAN HANDLE THINGS HERE BY MYSELF.
YES, SIR.
THINGS WILL BE EVEN TOUGHER WITH HANAMURA-SAN UNCONSCIOUS.
...YOU MIND LENDING A HAND?
WOULD...
...YOU WANT ME TO TAKE ON TOKIWA AND HOLD HIM HERE...
...WHILE YOU GO ALONE TO YOUR OFFICE TO PROTECT THE CHALICE?
...NO.

...I'LL ENGAGE TOKIWA.
YOU GO TO MY OFFICE.
...ARE YOU SURE?
...ALL RIGHT.
PARI (CRACKLE)
COUNT-ING DOWN FROM THREE.
1...
2...
3...
PAKI (SNAP)
DA DASH!!

!

WHA ...!?



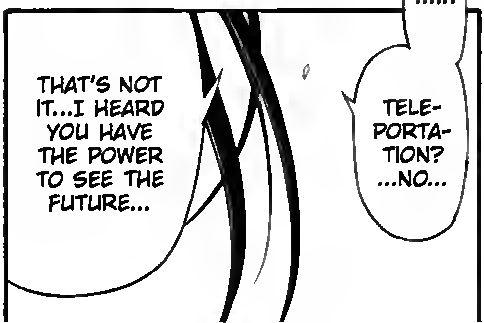
NOT PROTECTING THE CHALICE YOURSELF, BOSS?

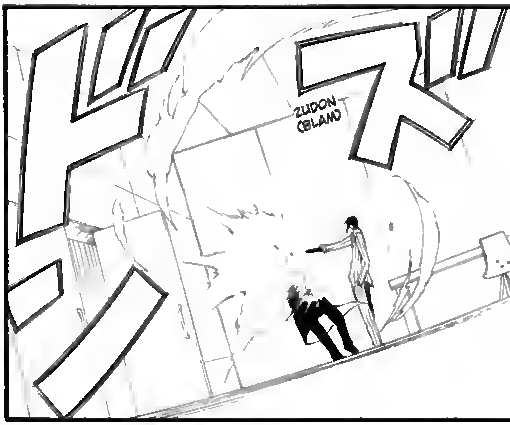
WE'VE MANAGED TO CLEAR THE ROOM...
NOW I'D LIKE YOU TO ENTERTAIN ME.

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU CAN DO TO ME, HMM?
A FIGUREHEAD WITH NO FIGHTING SKILLS?
PFFT!
THANKS? INTRIGUING.
HA ...!
...TO SHOW YOU MY THANKS FOR TRASHING ARCANA.
IT IS WEIGHING ON MY MIND... BUT I THOUGHT IT MORE PRESSING ...

WHA ...!?
BUSHU (BLRRSH)
WHEN DID YOU GET BEHIND ME...!?

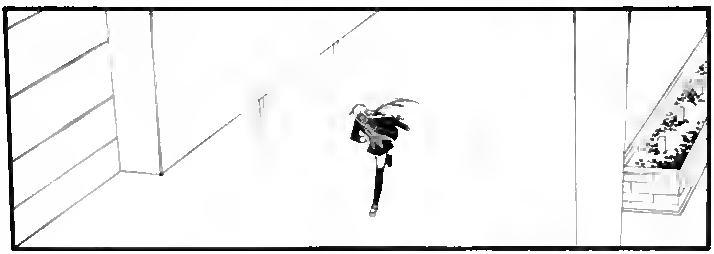
BOTA
BOTA (DRIP)

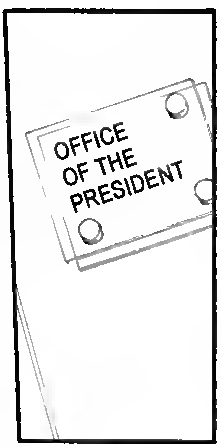

.....
TELE-PORTA-TION? ...NO...
THAT'S NOT IT...I HEARD YOU HAVE THE POWER TO SEE THE FUTURE...


ZUDON (SLAM)

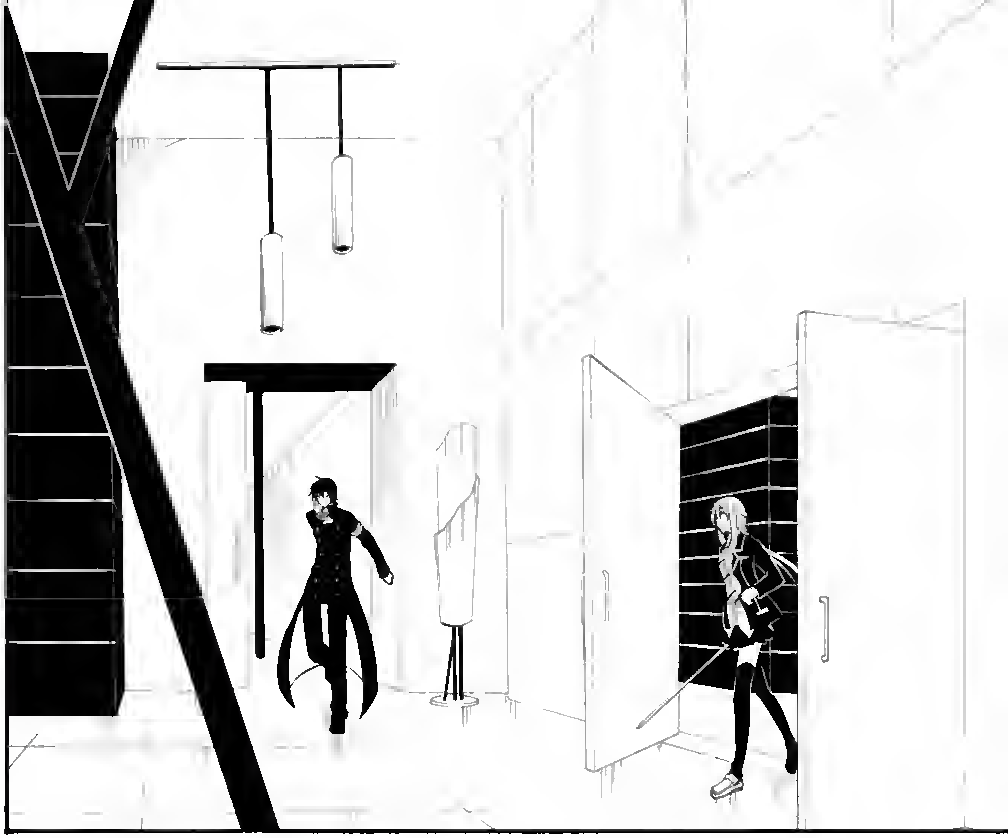
...BUT YOU ALSO HAVE THE ABILITY TO STOP TIME, HMM?

BAN (BAM)




OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

...THE CHALICE OF CREATION...!
ARCANA'S TREASURED RELIC...

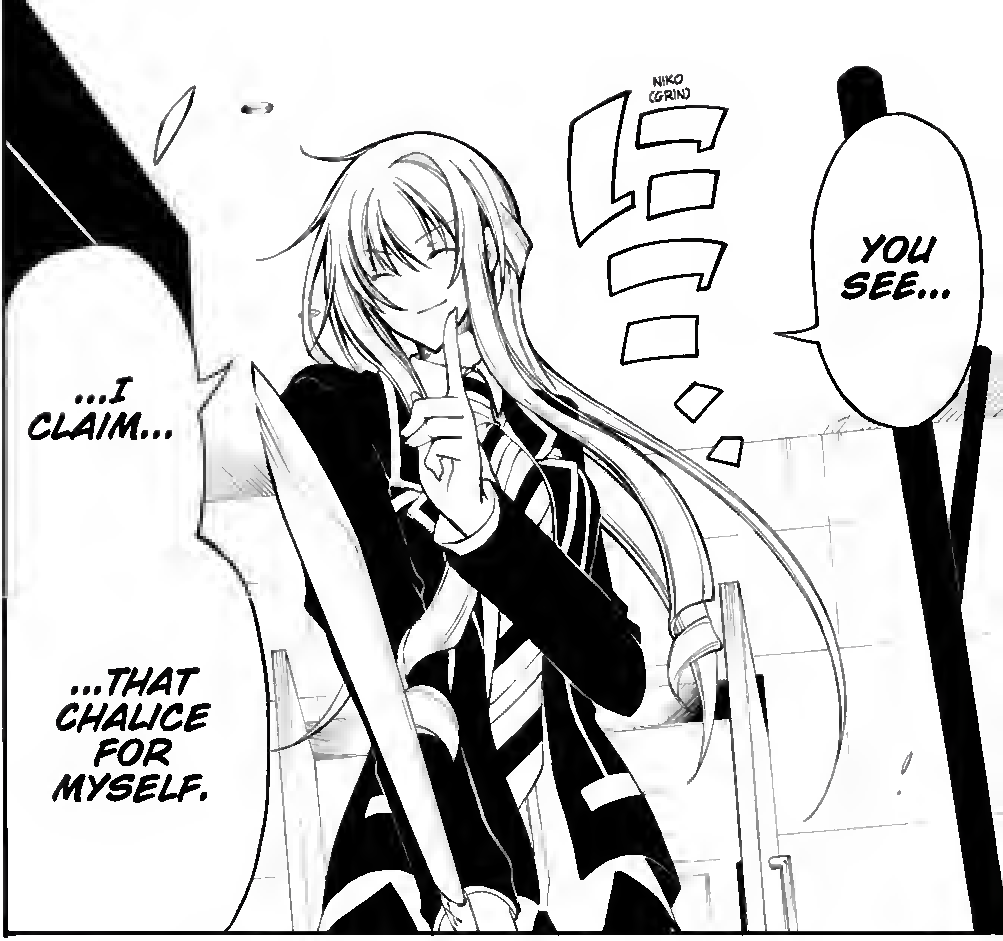


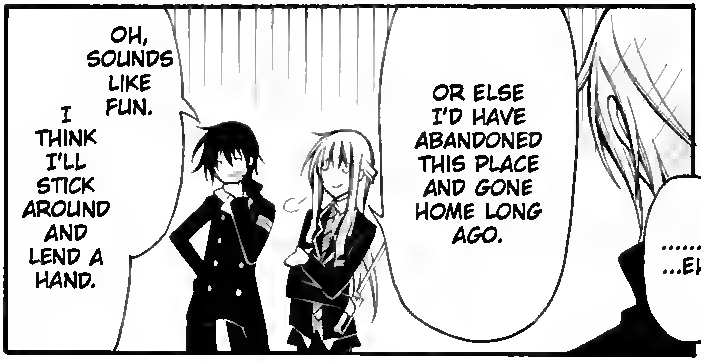
OH!

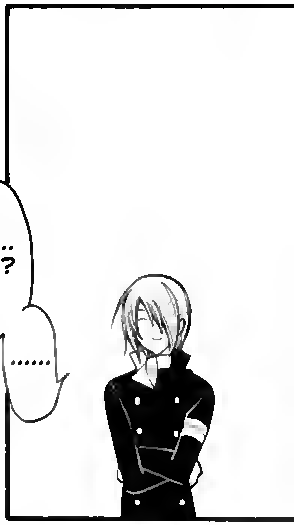
...
HUH?

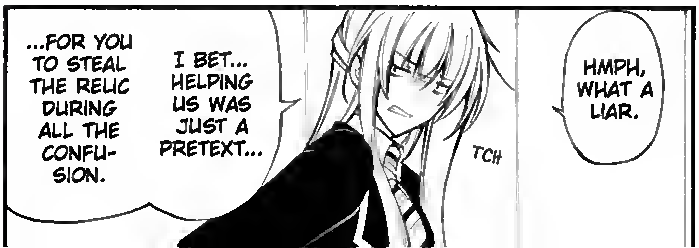
...I'M SO CLOSE TO GETTING IT OPEN.

I WISH YOU WOULD JUST LET ME GET ON WITH IT.
KOTSU (TOK)
KOTSU
TWO HYENAS.
TSUKI-MIYA AND HINATA ...
YOU GUYS AREN'T ARCANA...
...SO WHAT DOES IT MATTER TO YOU IF WE TAKE ARCANA'S RELICS?
... TRUE ...
IT'S REALLY NOT OUR CON-CERN.
I'M NOT ON THE BEST OF TERMS WITH THEM.
...SO THERE'S NO INCENTIVE FOR ME TO PROTECT AN ALLY'S RELICS FOR THE PURE-BLOOD...
AND I'M NOT BEING PAID...
I'M GLAD YOU BOTH AGREE.
NIKO (GRIN)
WOULD YOU MIND MAKING AN ABOUT-FACE, THEN?
KAMU-HABURI WILL BE TAKING THE CHAL-ICE.
...OH NO, THAT WON'T DO AT ALL.


NIKO (GRIN)
YOU SEE...
...I CLAIM...
...THAT CHALICE FOR MYSELF.


OH, SOUNDS LIKE FUN.
I THINK I'LL STICK AROUND AND LEND A HAND.
OR ELSE I'D HAVE ABANDONED THIS PLACE AND GONE HOME LONG AGO.


.....
...EH?
.....

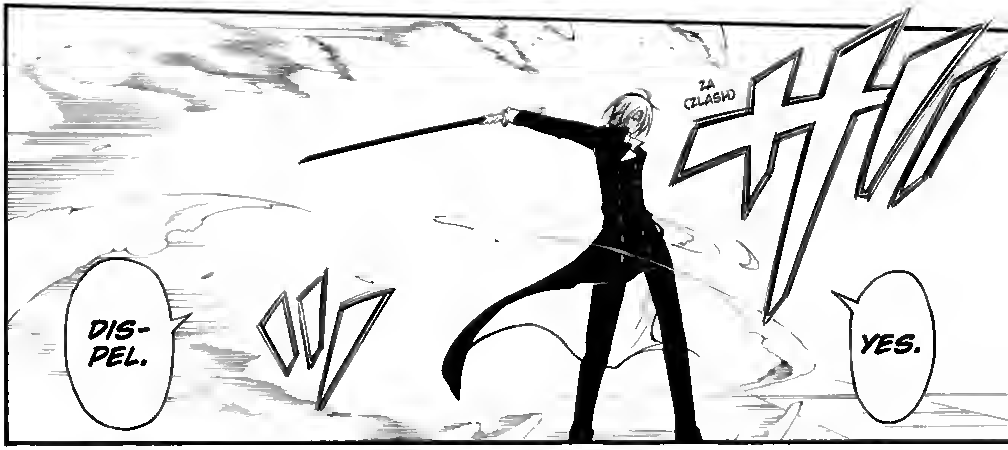

...FOR YOU TO STEAL THE RELIC DURING ALL THE CONFU-SION.
I BET... HELPING US WAS JUST A PRETEXT...
TCH
HMPH, WHAT A LIAR.

AH-HA-HA... WHAT AN UNJUST ACCUSATION.
IT'S TOTALLY OBVIOUS.
WELL...IN ANY CASE, I THINK THIS GUY'S GONNA GET...
...IN BOTH OUR WAYS.
YEAH.
...ALL RIGHT, WE CAN TEAM UP...
...UNTIL WE FIND THE CHALICE.
BUT NO GUARANTEES ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS AFTER.
...YEESH, THAT'S RIGHT.
YOU HYENAS ARE GREEDY BEYOND ALL ELSE...
SURU (SHHK)
I WAS NAIVE IN MY ASSESSMENT OF YOU.
SORRY.

RUIN-OUS CAS-KET!

RING OF YANG.

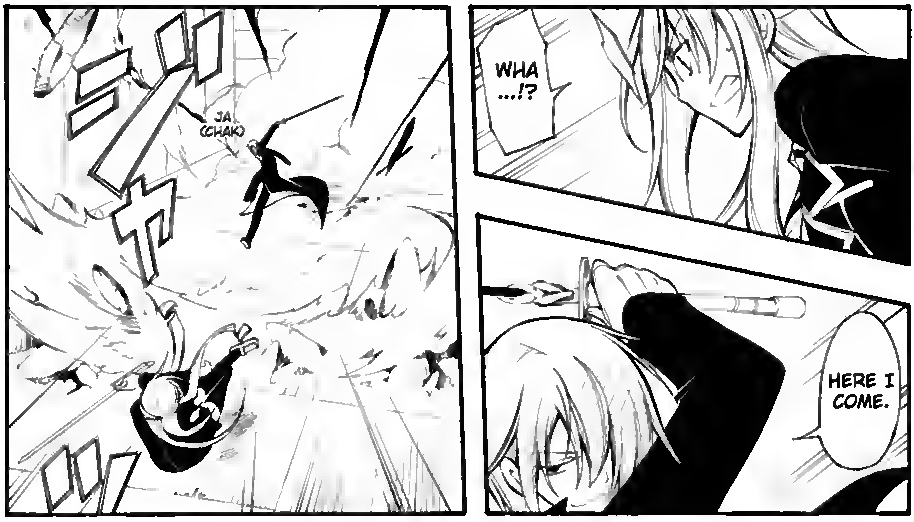
...NORMAL SPELLS ARE POWER-LESS.
AGAINST A DIVINE RELIC...


ZA (CLASH)
DIS-PEL.
YES.

DOSU
DOSU
DOSU (SHAKO)
DOSU

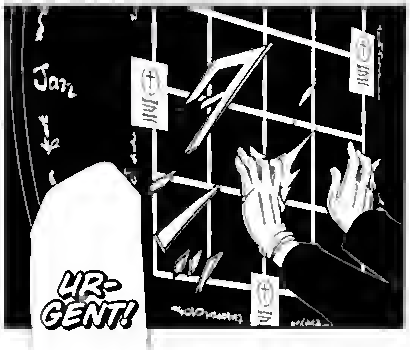
O, blood ...
NOOO ...
... HUH !?
KARI (BITE)

ZA (WHISH)
HMPH.

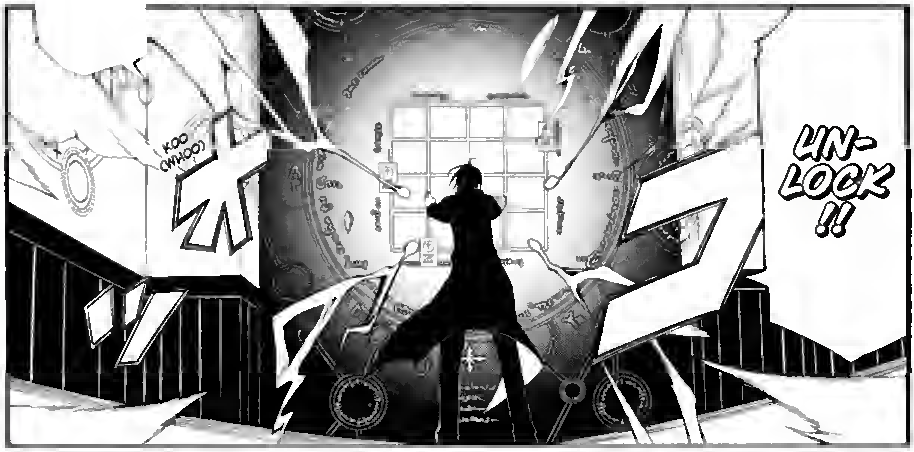

JA (CHAK)
WHA ...!?
HERE I COME.

HUNH !?
'COS MY SPELLS HAVE NO EFFECT!
KURU (WHIRL)
I'M OUTTA HERE! IT'S ALL YOU!

TCH ...
ZAZA (SKIID)


Jam
JAM
JAM
JAM
JAM
UR-GENT!

WHA ...!?
BIND!
HEY!
OUTTA MY WAY, SMALL FRY!
BIND!
BIND !!

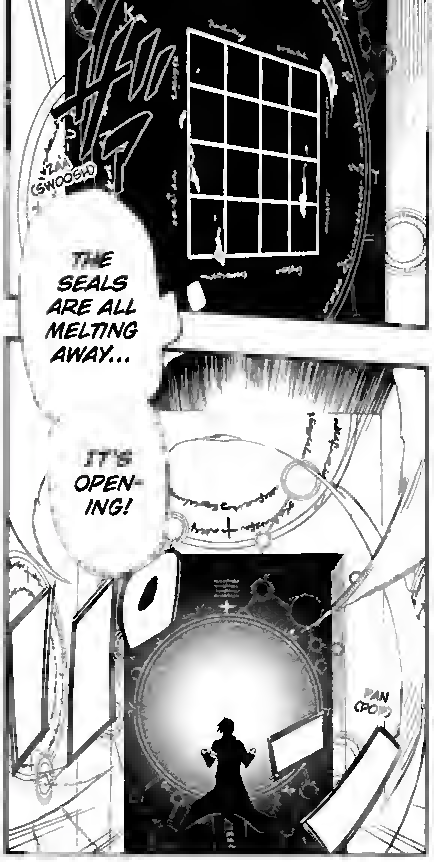

KOO GWAOO!
UN-LOCK !!

TCH.
GETTING THE CHALICE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN SQUAB-BLING!

QUIT MESSING AROUND!
HEY!
SHADDUP! YOU HOLD HIM AT BAY.
I'LL GET THIS VAULT OPEN IN A JIFFY!!

—YEAH, RIGHT...I'M MAKING OFF WITH THE CHALICE WHILE THEY'RE BUSY WITH EACH OTHER! HA!
BLEH.

GIIIII (CREEEAK)


SLAM (SWOOSH)
THE SEALS ARE ALL MELTING AWAY...
IT'S OPEN-ING!
PAN (POP)

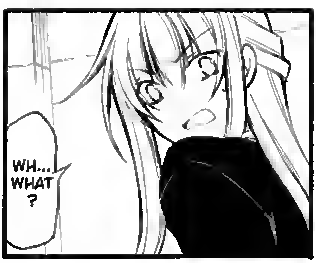
NII (GRIN)

YOU GOT IT OPEN!?

...HM?

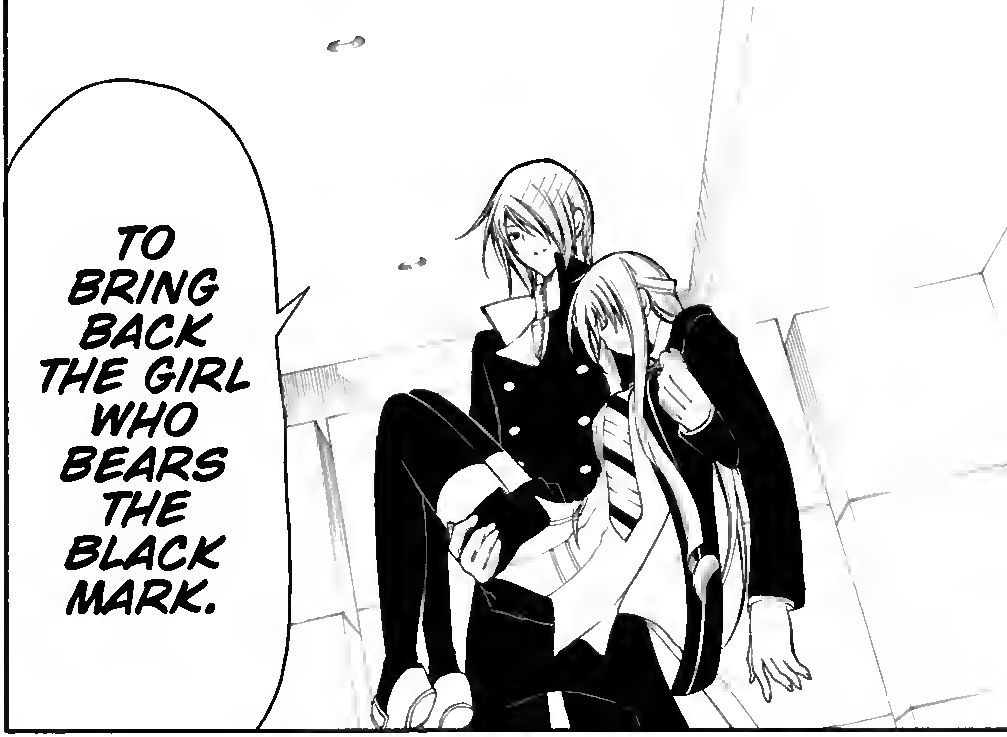
...HA-HA... WHAT A BAD JOKE
HA...
...
THIS IS WHAT I WAS PLAYING THE GOOD GUY FOR...?

WHOA...

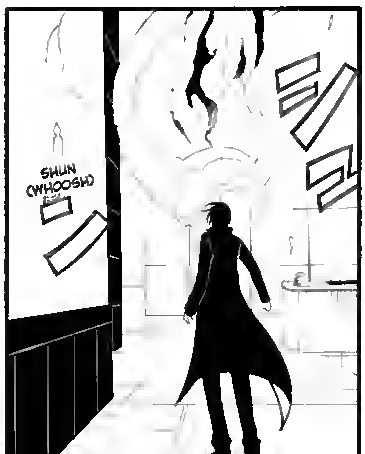

WH... WHAT?

IT'S EMPTY ...?

THAT IZUMI .....!!
IT WAS SUCH A GREAT OPPORTUNITY!
ARGH !!
SFX: GASU (SCRITCH) GASU
WHAT A PAIN
IT MUST BE AT A BRANCH OFFICE OR SOMETHING, OR...
THAT LYING BIG SHOT
...AND THERE'S NO OTHER LIKELY HIDING SPOT IN THIS BUILDING.
THE VAULT WAS A BLUFF ...
TO (WHAK)
HAAH
...IT CAN'T BE HELPED. HE'LL SEE I DID MY BEST...
...GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES.
THAT'S IT, I'LL WRITE A CURSE ON HIS DESK WITH MY BLOOD— LIKE "GO BALD"
SU (SSSK)
HUH ...?
WELL, IT'S TRUE THAT THIS...
...WAS ONE OF OUR OBJECTIVES AS WELL.
DOSA (THUD)


TO BRING BACK THE GIRL WHO BEARS THE BLACK MARK.

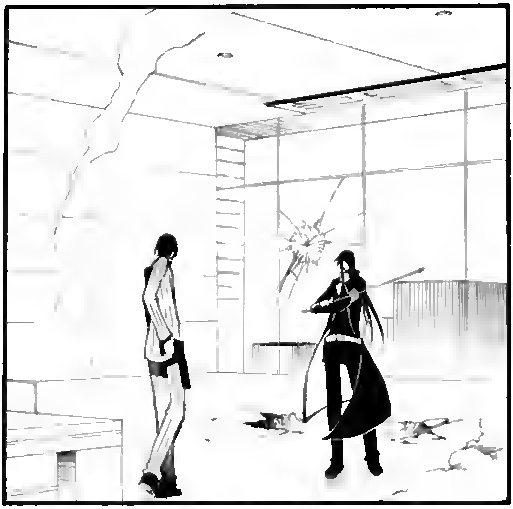
.....SAY AGAIN?


SHUN
WHOOSH

WELL, THEN. LATER.

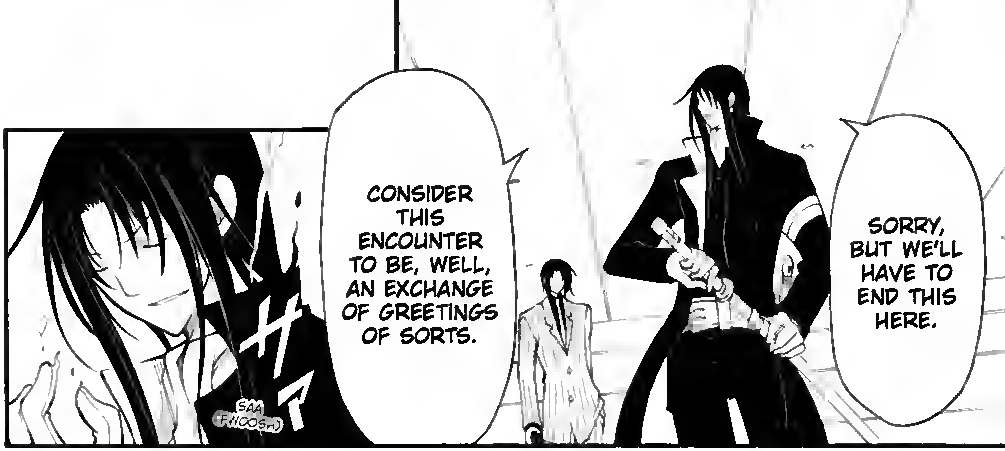
HUH...? UH...
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO REACT TO THAT...?

PLL...

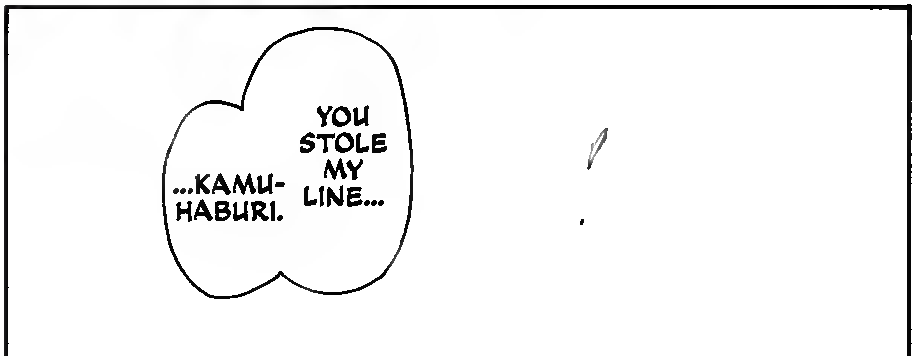


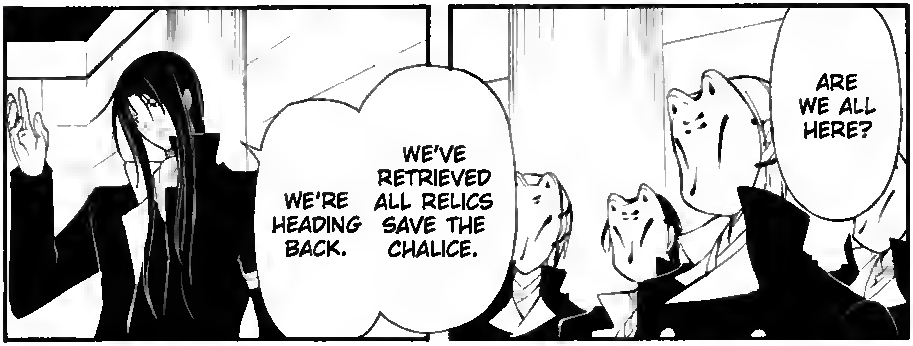
(BEEP)
HELLO
KIKU-SAKA?
..... UNDER-STOOD.

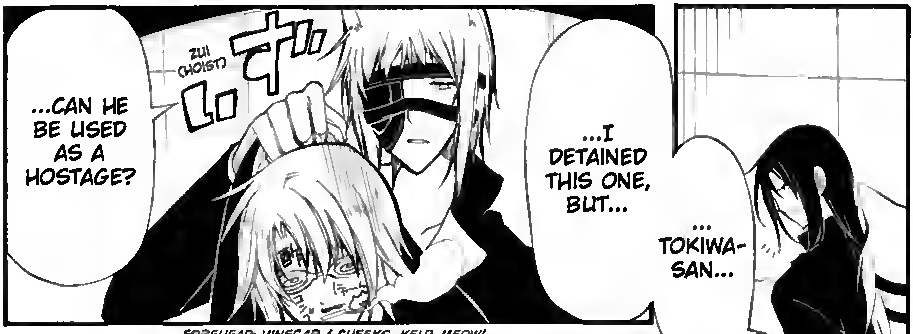
SEEMS WE'VE TAKEN ALL WE CAN FROM HERE.


SORRY, BUT WE'LL HAVE TO END THIS HERE.
CONSIDER THIS ENCOUNTER TO BE, WELL, AN EXCHANGE OF GREETINGS OF SORTS.
SAA (FWOOSH)

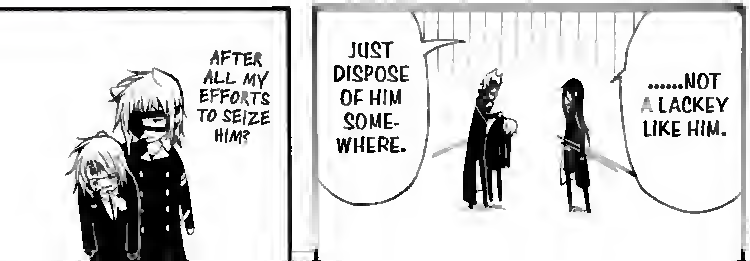
AAA (SHH)
YOU'VE MANAGED TO ESCAPE DEATH TODAY, ARCANA.

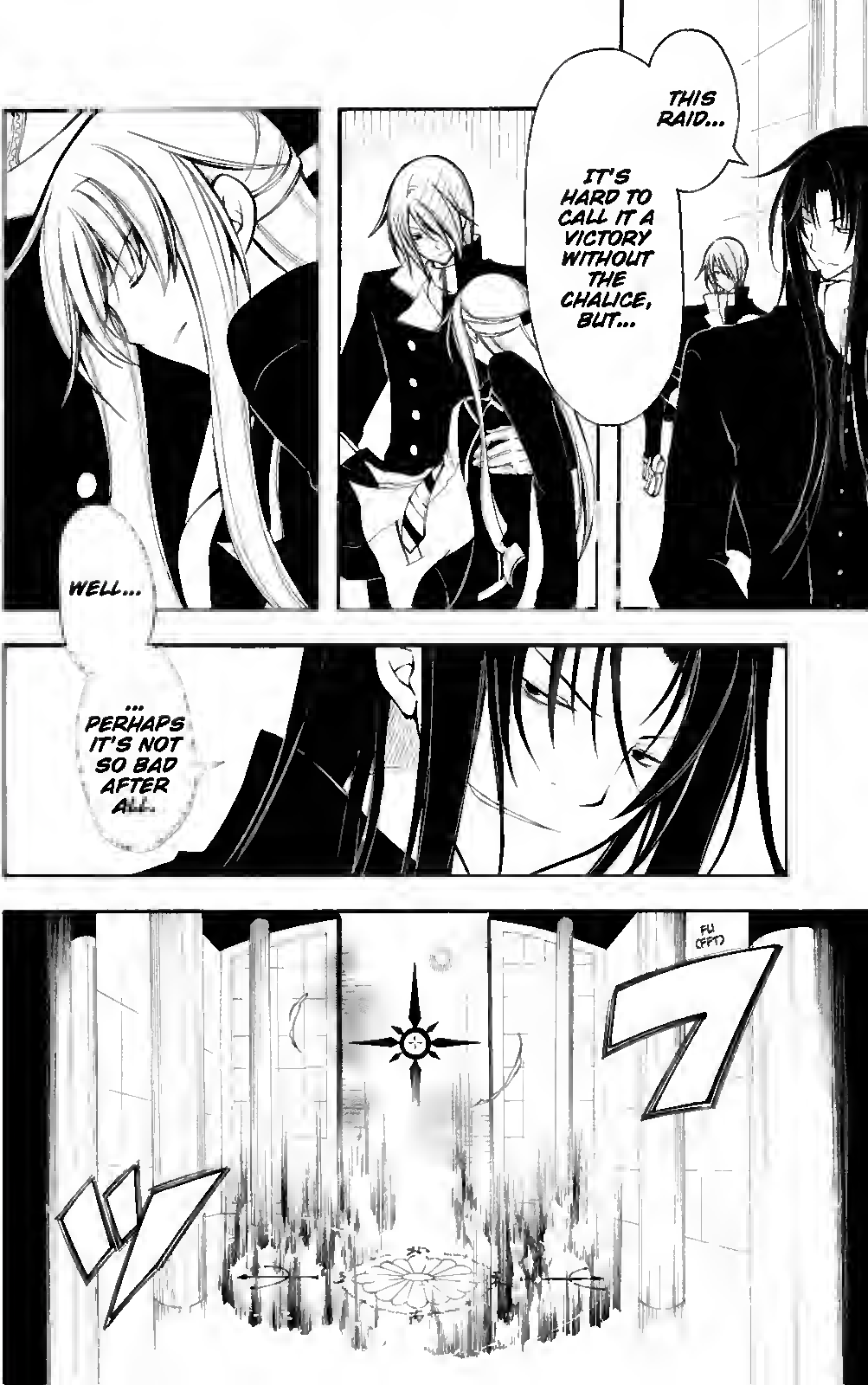

YOU STOLE MY LINE...
...KAMU-HABURI.

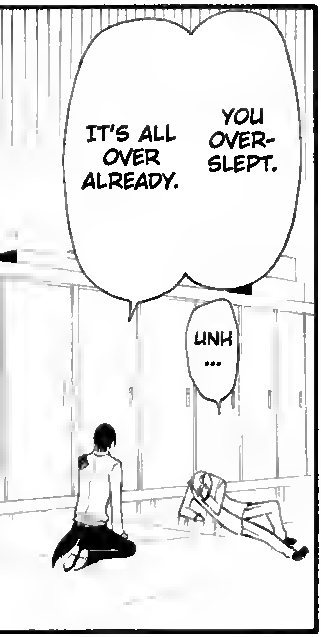


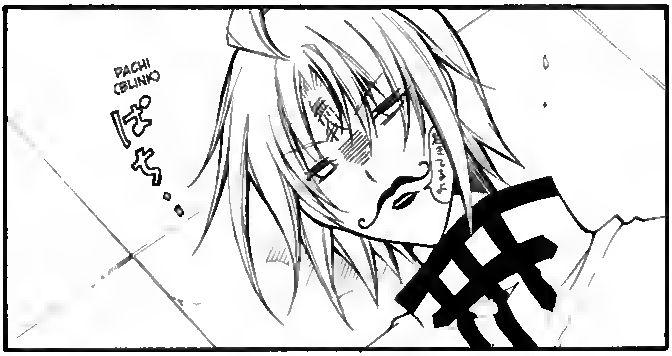




FOREHEAD: VINEGAR / CHEEKS: KELP, MEOW!




THIS RAID...
IT'S HARD TO CALL IT A VICTORY WITHOUT THE CHALICE, BUT...
WELL...
...PERHAPS IT'S NOT SO BAD AFTER ALL.
FU (FF7)
7

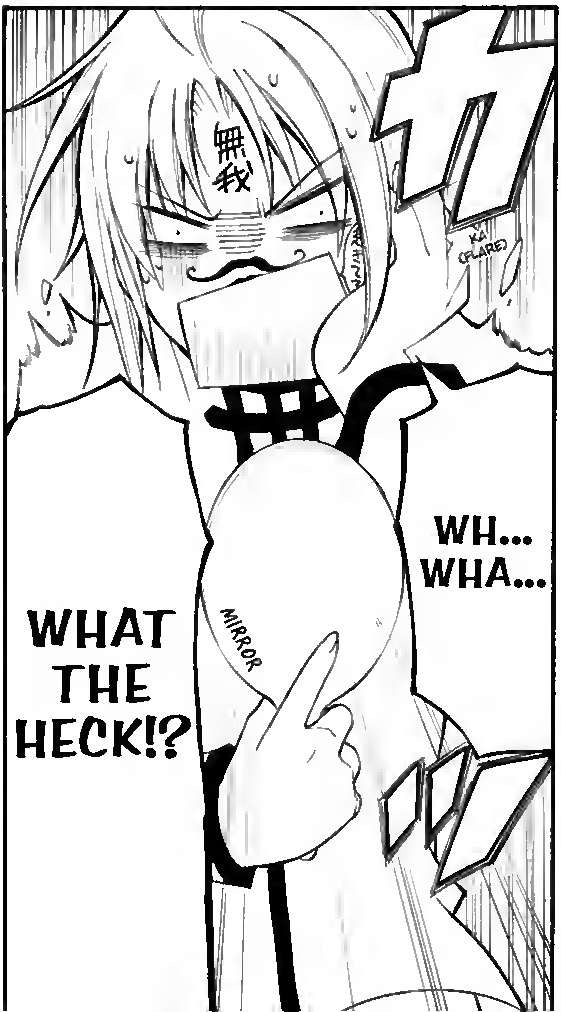

IT'S ALL OVER ALREADY.
YOU OVER-SLEPT.
UNH ...

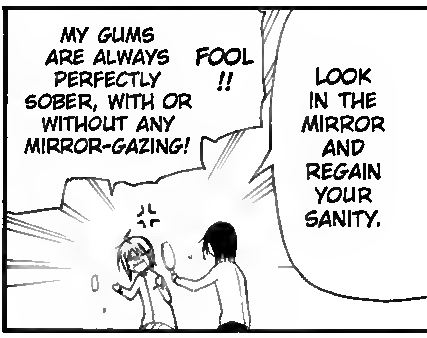

PACHI (BLINK)

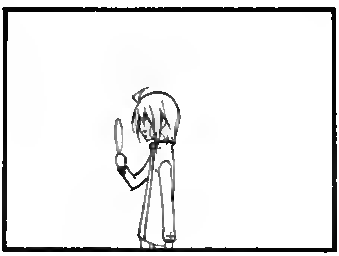
AH.
HE'S FINALLY COMING AROUND.

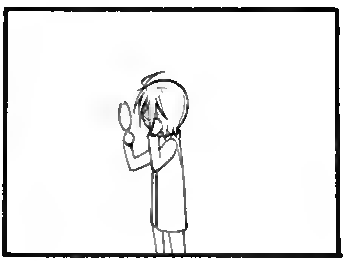
...BUT WHAT DD I DD TD PLAY BASKETBALL WITH EVERY-BDDY?
THE TINY PERSDN WHO LIVES IN MY GUMS IS CLUTCHING HIS KNEES AND LAUGHING HIS LITTLE HEAD DFF...
GUGU (FLEX)
THIS IS BAD. HE'S HIT HIS HEAD HARD.

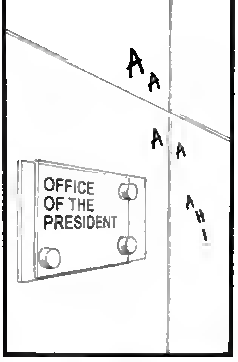
...HANA-MURA...
...TSUZU-KI?
DO YOU KNOW THE SITUATION...


無我
KA (FLARE)
WH... WHA...
MIRROR
WHAT THE HECK!?


MY GUMS ARE ALWAYS PERFECTLY SOBER, WITH OR WITHOUT ANY MIRROR-GAZING!
FOOL !!
LOOK IN THE MIRROR AND REGAIN YOUR SANITY.





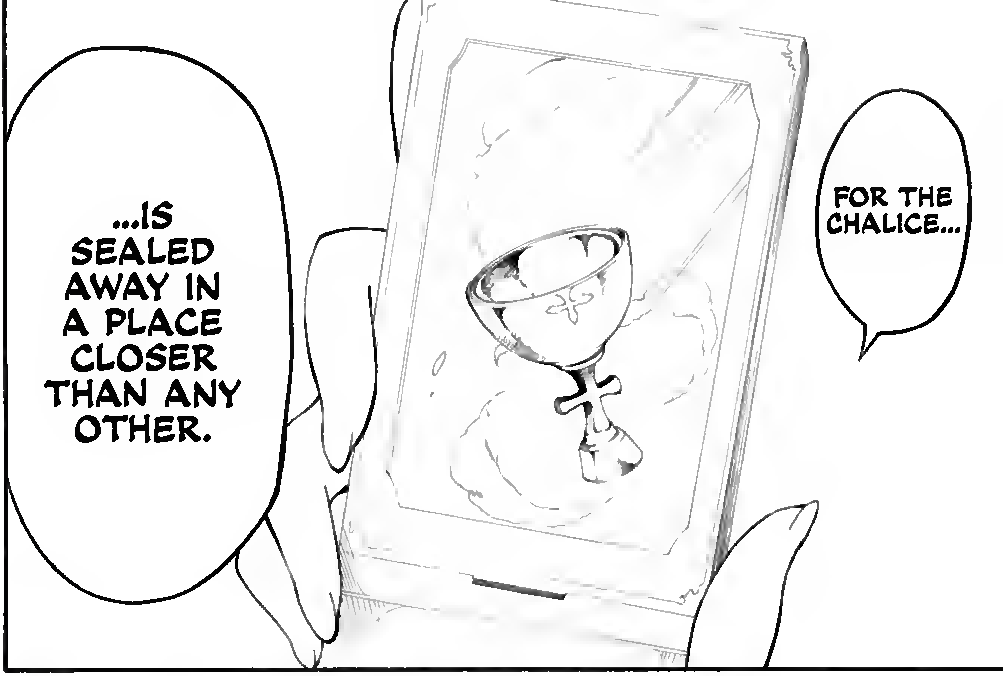

AA
A
A
AH!
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

KATSU
CTAK

..."IT SEEMS INSTINCTUAL...

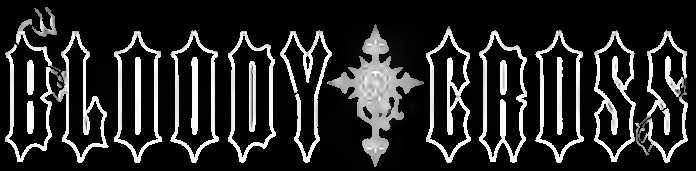
"...TO HIDE VALUABLE ITEMS IN PLAIN SIGHT"... EH.

HE WAS SPOT ON.

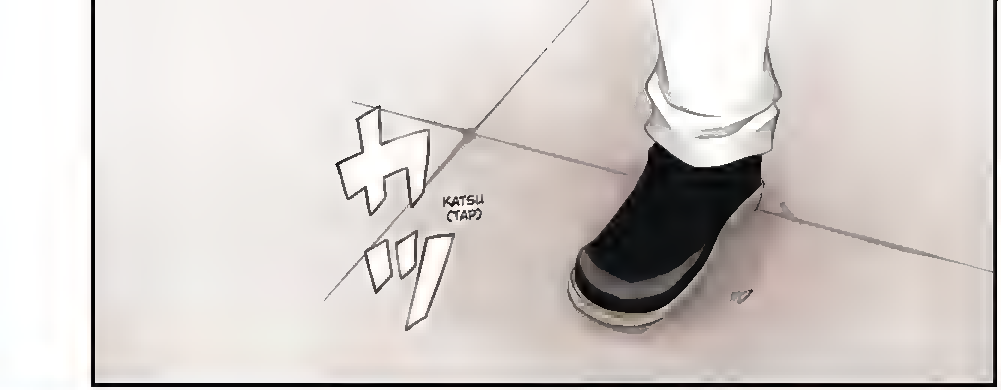

FOR THE CHALICE...
...IS SEALED AWAY IN A PLACE CLOSER THAN ANY OTHER.

...OH-HO.

LUCKY ME...I OVERHEARD SOMETHING GOOD.


BLOODY CROSS

BLOODY CROSS


KATSU
(TAP)

SO THIS IS ARCANA'S BRANCH OFFICE.

...WHOA!

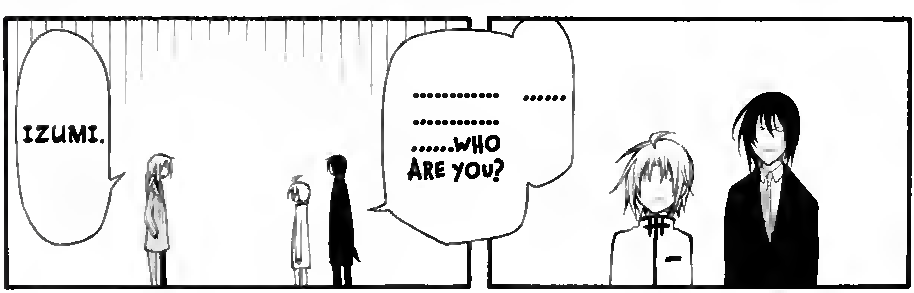
Chapter 27
# Kindhearted Beasts

# Chapter 27
# Kindhearted Beasts

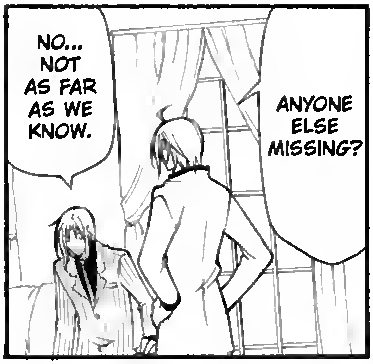
BLOODY CROSS

THE SECURITY IN THIS PLACE IS PRETTY TIGHT, EH, IZUMI?
YO!
BAN CHAN
FROM THE FIRST FLOOR...
...IT TOOK US THIRTY MINUTES TO GET UP HERE WITH ALL THE CHECKPOINTS AND RED TAPE.
IT WILL TAKE ABOUT FIVE MINUTES TO ISSUE YOUR PASSES.
PLEASE HAND OVER YOUR WEAPONS.
PAT DOWN
THIS BRANCH TENDS TO PERFORM OUR LESS SAVORY TASKS, SHALL WE SAY, SO...
KOTSU CTOKO
...SECURITY HAS ALWAYS BEEN A LITTLE TIGHTER HERE.
BUT NOW...

...WHAT WITH KAMUHABURI'S UNWELCOME INVASION YESTERDAY...
...I MERELY INCREASED OUR VIGILANCE A NOTCH...
I APOLOGIZE FOR THE INCONVE-NIENCE.


IZUMI.
..... .....
.....
.....WHO ARE YOU?

NIKORI (SMILE)
にっこり
NOTHING YOU NEED TO CONCERN YOURSELVES OVER.
OH... I USED AN AWFUL LOT OF POWER THE OTHER DAY, YOU SEE.
...YOUR HAIR...
I DON'T REMEMBER IT BEING BLOND?
KUKI.
SOME TEA FOR OUR GUESTS.
YES, SIR.
...SURE.
I DO HOPE HE'S ALL RIGHT.
YOU KNOW... I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO REACH HIM SINCE THE ATTACK...
KYORO (GLANCE)
HUH? WHERE'S MAKINO?


NO... NOT AS FAR AS WE KNOW.
ANYONE ELSE MISSING?

I'D HEARD THE HALF-BLOOD WAS KIDNAPPED BY KAMU-HABURI...
...BUT MAKINO WAS TAKEN AS WELL?
HE'S MISS-ING...?

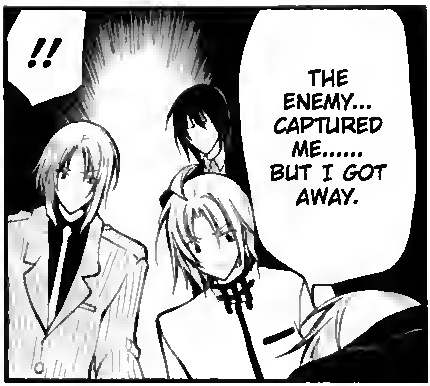
I-I-I
HWAHWAH
... YOUR ..... EXCEL-LENCY .....
ZU (SLIP)

I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING THOSE TWO HAVE IN COMMON.
I DON'T KNOW WHY THEY'D TAKE THEM BOTH.
...I DON'T GET IT.
GA (GRAB)

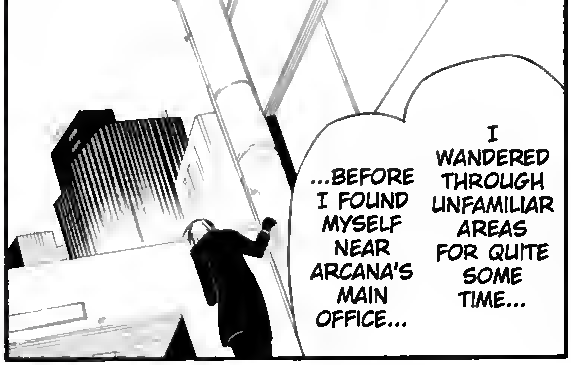
... Y...

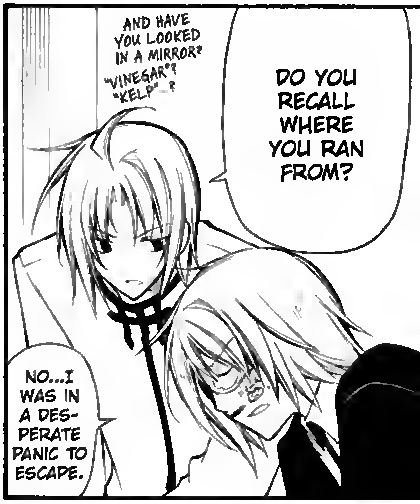
MAKINO-KUN!
!
DO (THUD)

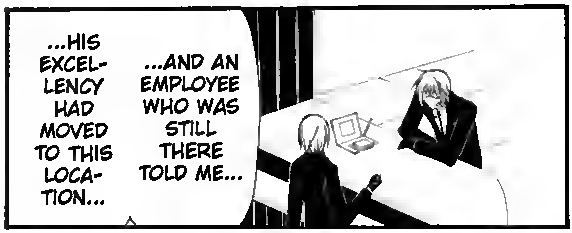
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN...?
HUFF ...
THE ENEMY ...

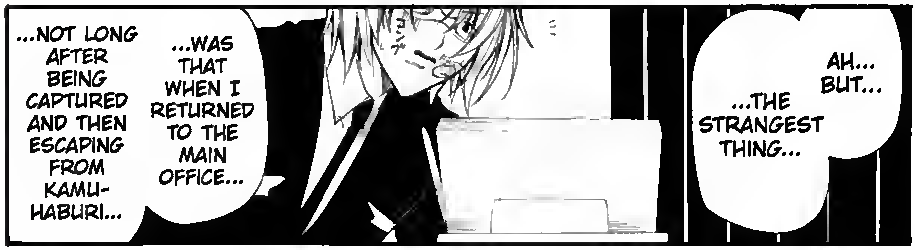

!!
THE ENEMY... CAPTURED ME..... BUT I GOT AWAY.

SO HE WAS KID-NAPPED AFTER ALL.
TCH ...
HE SEEMS TO HAVE CAUGHT A CHILL.
PREPARE A BLANKET AND A PLACE FOR HIM TO REST.

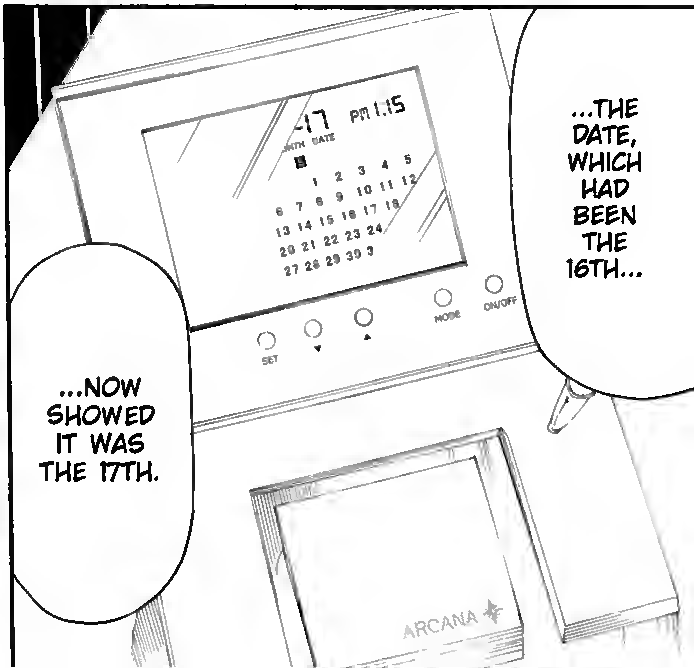

I WANDERED THROUGH UNFAMILIAR AREAS FOR QUITE SOME TIME...
...BEFORE I FOUND MYSELF NEAR ARCANA'S MAIN OFFICE...

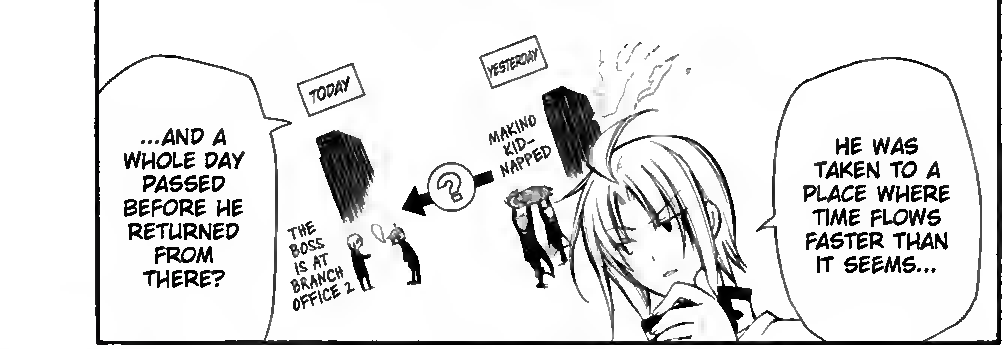

DO YOU RECALL WHERE YOU RAN FROM?
AND HAVE YOU LOOKED IN A MIRROR? "VINEGAR"? "KELP"...?
NO...I WAS IN A DESPERATE PANIC TO ESCAPE.

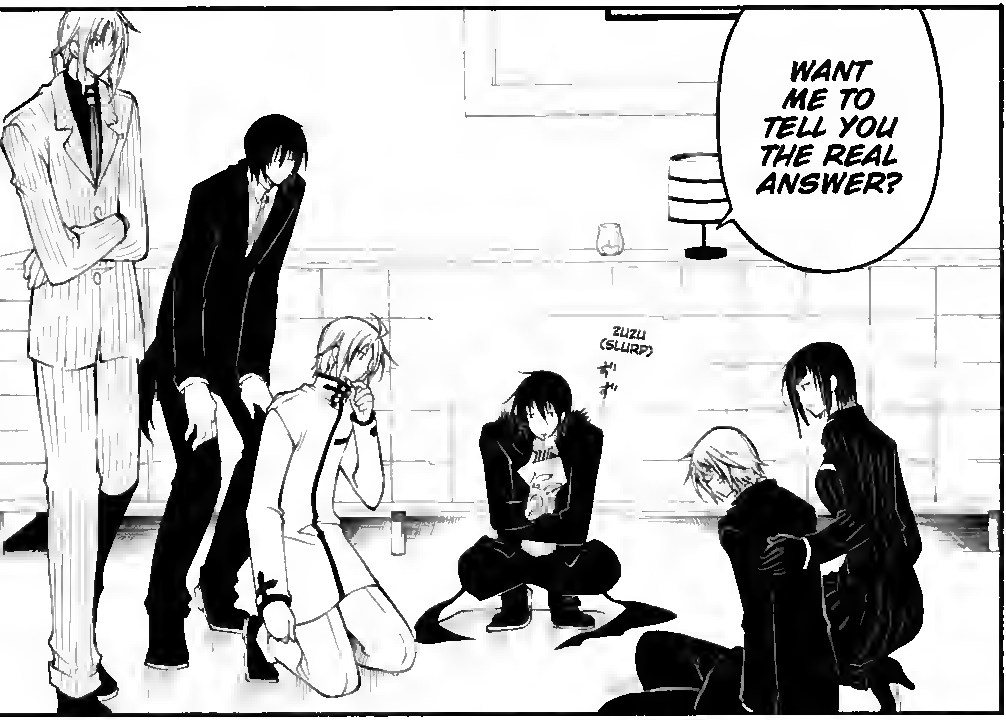

...AND AN EMPLOYEE WHO WAS STILL THERE TOLD ME...
...HIS EXCELLENCY HAD MOVED TO THIS LOCATION...


...WAS THAT WHEN I RETURNED TO THE MAIN OFFICE...
...NOT LONG AFTER BEING CAPTURED AND THEN ESCAPING FROM KAMUHABURI...
AH... BUT...
...THE STRANGEST THING...

WHAT COULD IT MEAN?
?
SOME SORT OF SPELL?


...THE DATE, WHICH HAD BEEN THE 16TH...
...NOW SHOWED IT WAS THE 17TH.
17 PM 1:15
MONTH DATE
SET
MODE
ON/OFF
ARCANA

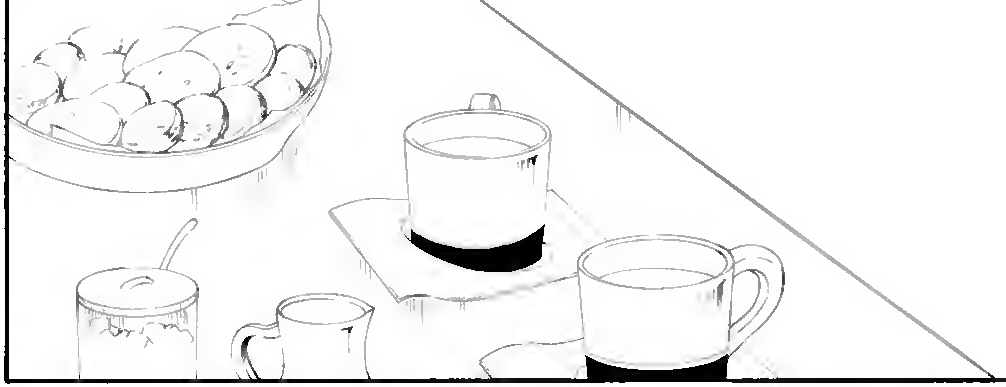

HE WAS TAKEN TO A PLACE WHERE TIME FLOWS FASTER THAN IT SEEMS...
YESTERDAY
MAKING KID-NAPPED
TODAY
THE BOSS IS AT BRANCH OFFICE 2
?
...AND A WHOLE DAY PASSED BEFORE HE RETURNED FROM THERE?

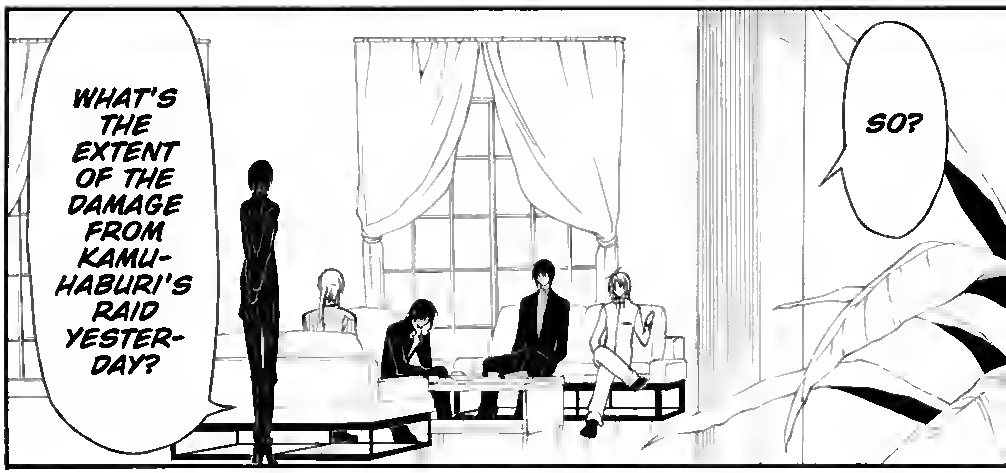


CARTON TROPICAL MILK / APPLES, BANANAS, WATERMELON, CHERRIES, MELON, ORANGES / REFRESHING AND DELICIOUS!

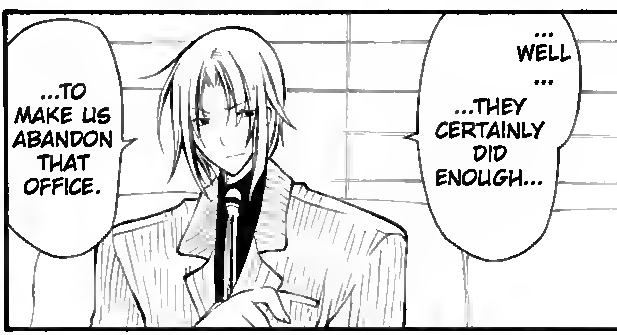
AFTER KAMU-HABURI CARRIED HIM OFF...
...MAKINO WOKE UP AND WAS MAKING A NUISANCE OF HIM-SELF.
HE WASN'T ANY USE TO THEM, SO THEY TOSSED HIM OUT...
...INTO A PARK TRASH BIN
MEH. HE'LL JUST WAKE UP AND FIND HIS WAY HOME ON HIS OWN
PLEASE DO NOT DUMP HOUSEHOLD GARBAGE HERE!!
SEE? THAT'S WHY TOKIWA-SAN SAID TO DISPOSE OF HIM
SHUT UP!
THE NEXT DAY.
...OH!
THEY'RE GONNA KILL MEEEE !!
DA (CAW)
HE WAS PASSED OUT FOR A WHOLE DAY?
OW!
STOP IT!
THAT HURTS !!
GYA (SQUAWK)

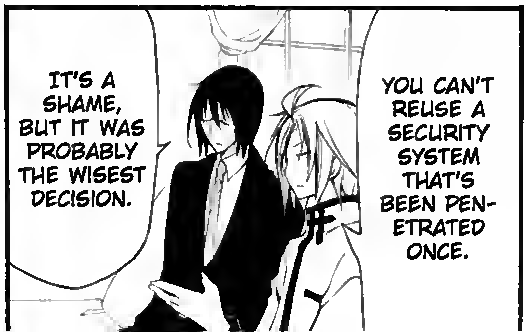
...I THOUGHT I DETECTED A FOUL SMELL.
DON (SHOVE)
I MEAN, SERIOUSLY...
...WHAT POINT WOULD THERE BE IN TAKING HIM?
RIGHT... THERE ISN'T, COME TO THINK OF IT.
THE FOUL SMELL EMANATING FROM YOU IS NAUSEATING ME...
JUST LEAVE THE ROOM FOR THE MO—ULP!
I'LL SEE THAT HE IS REMOVED.
HE DOESN'T SEEM TO POSSESS IMPORTANT INSIDER INFO.
AND WHO KNOWS IF ARCANA WOULD EVEN PAY A RANSOM FOR HIM.
RIGHT, RIGHT
UH-HUH, FOR SURE
YOUR EXCELLENCY! THEY'RE MOCKING ARCANA EMPLOYEES!
PLEASE SAY SOMETHING!!
MAKINO-KUN.
GO (WOOSH)
NO wAAAy!

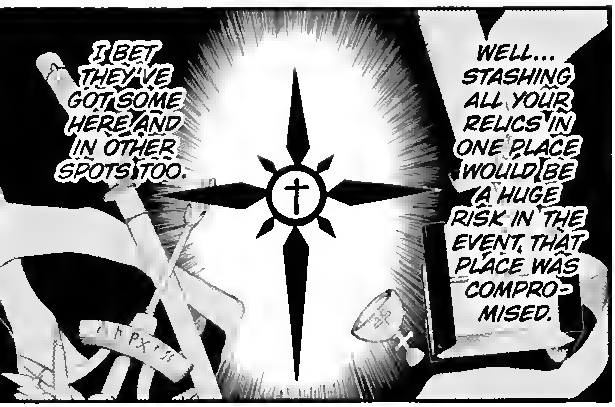



WHAT'S THE EXTENT OF THE DAMAGE FROM KAMU-HABURI'S RAID YESTER-DAY?
SO?

AS FOR THE DIVINE RELICS STORED IN THE MAIN OFFICE...
... ALMOST ALL WERE TAKEN AS WELL.


... WELL ... ...THEY CERTAINLY DID ENOUGH...
...TO MAKE US ABANDON THAT OFFICE.


YOU CAN'T REUSE A SECURITY SYSTEM THAT'S BEEN PEN-ETRATED ONCE.
IT'S A SHAME, BUT IT WAS PROBABLY THE WISEST DECISION.

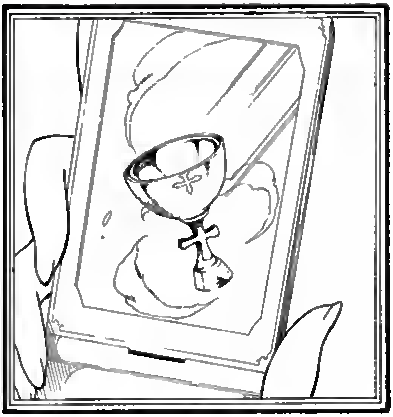

I BET THEY'VE GOT SOME HERE AND IN OTHER SPOTS TOO.
WELL... STASHING ALL YOUR RELICS IN ONE PLACE WOULD BE A HUGE RISK IN THE EVENT THAT PLACE WAS COMPRO-MISED.

...THOSE STORED IN THE MAIN OFFICE... HUH.
PORI (KRNCH)

...ARCANA ALONE POSSESSES...
I WONDER HOW MANY RELICS...

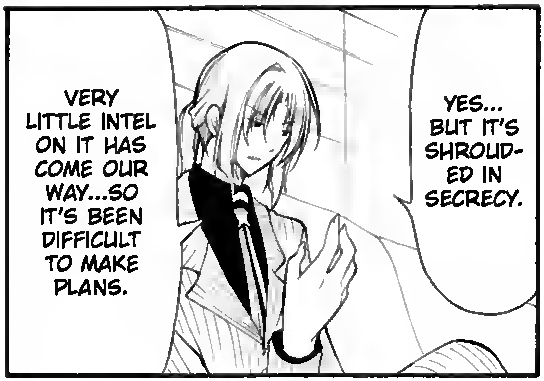
PLUS...

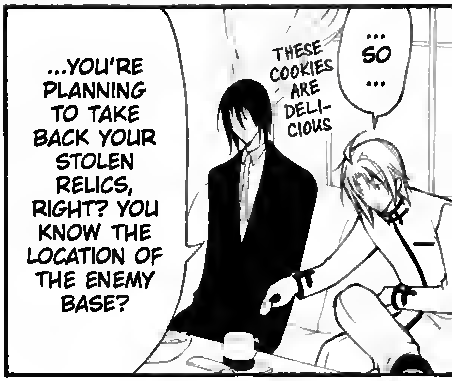
...AFTER THEY LEFT...
...I KNOW I SAW IT.



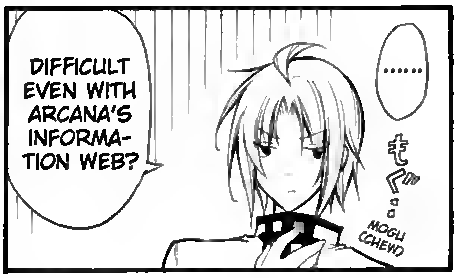
IZUMI KEEPS THE CHALICE HIDDEN CLOSE AT HAND.

...HOW TO DRAG IT OUTTA HIM?
PERORI CLICK
NOW...


VERY LITTLE INTEL ON IT HAS COME OUR WAY...SO IT'S BEEN DIFFICULT TO MAKE PLANS.
YES... BUT IT'S SHROUDED IN SECRECY.


...YOU'RE PLANNING TO TAKE BACK YOUR STOLEN RELICS, RIGHT? YOU KNOW THE LOCATION OF THE ENEMY BASE?
THESE COOKIES ARE DELICIOUS
...SO...

THOSE KAMUHABURI HAD WEAPON-TYPE DIVINE RELICS...
...AND THEY WERE WAY STRONGER THAN US...
...BUT THEY DIDN'T TRY TO KILL HER.

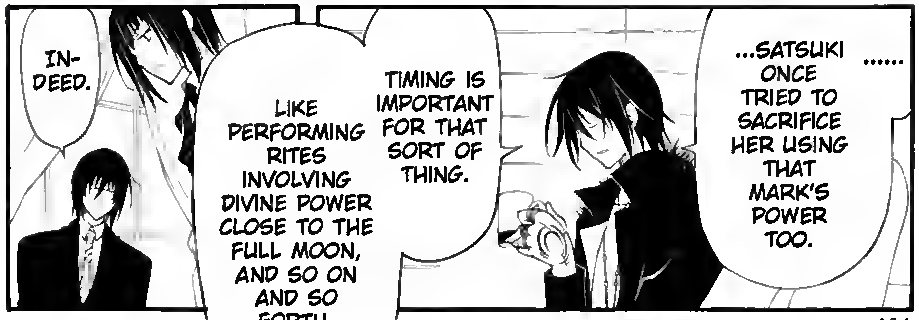

DIFFICULT EVEN WITH ARCANA'S INFORMATION WEB?
.....
MOGU (CHEW)

OH...WE PROBABLY DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THAT.
IF THEY WERE GONNA KILL HER, THEY COULD'VE CARRIED HER OFF AS A CORPSE.
...WON'T TSUKI-MIYA BE IN DANGER?
IF WE DELAY TOO LONG...

I GOT THE IMPRESSION THEY TOOK TSUKIMIYA WITH SOME PURPOSE IN MIND.
I DON'T THINK THEY'LL OFF HER ANYTIME SOON.
...BE-CAUSE ...

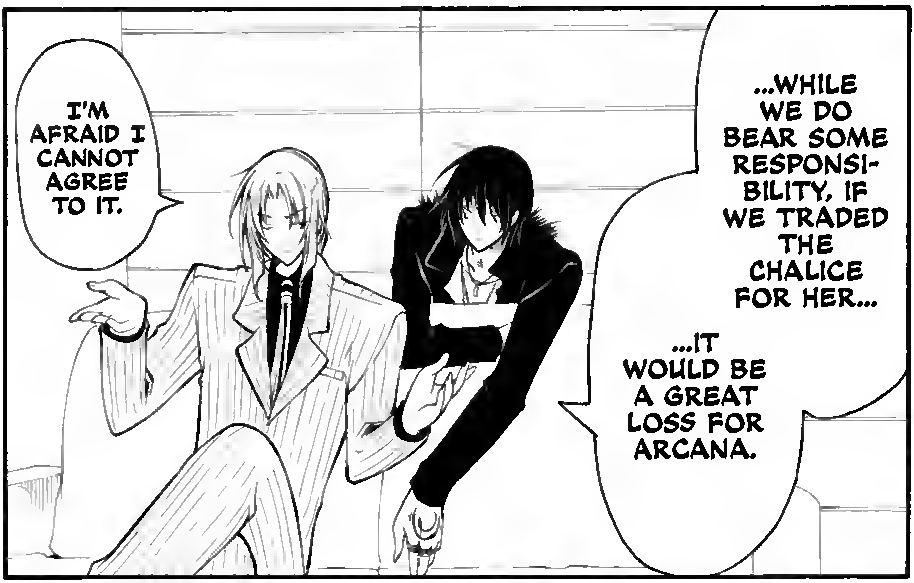
"BLACK MARK"?

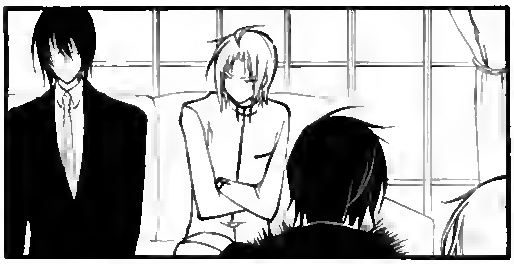
...WHEN THEY GRAB-BED HER...
...THEY CALLED HER "THE GIRL WHO BEARS THE BLACK MARK."


IN-DEED.
LIKE PERFORMING RITES INVOLVING DIVINE POWER CLOSE TO THE FULL MOON, AND SO ON AND SO FORTH.
TIMING IS IMPORTANT FOR THAT SORT OF THING.
.....
...SATSUKI ONCE TRIED TO SACRIFICE HER USING THAT MARK'S POWER TOO.

...OH!
HEY, HERE'S AN IDEA...
...KAMU-HABURI ORIGINALLY CAME...
...TO STEAL THE CHALICE OF CREATION THAT ARCANA'S GOT, RIGHT?
SO...
TO (THMP)
...MAYBE THEY'LL RETURN TSUKIMIYA IF WE GIVE 'EM THE CHALICE.
...IT'S TRUE ...
...THAT SHE WAS KIDNAPPED WHILE ASSISTING ARCANA...
...SO WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO AID IN HER RECOVERY.
...THEY'LL TRADE HER FOR THE CHALICE.
HOW-EVER... I DON'T THINK...
I BELIEVE THEY CAME HERE TO OBTAIN BOTH.
THEY WANT HER AND THE CHALICE, NOT JUST THE CHALICE ALONE.
SO THEY WON'T BE SATISFIED WITH MERELY THE ONE.

...AND ...
...TO BE FRANK...
.....

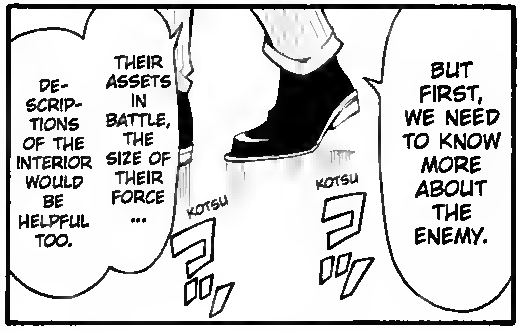

I'M AFRAID I CANNOT AGREE TO IT.
...WHILE WE DO BEAR SOME RESPONSI-BILITY, IF WE TRADED THE CHALICE FOR HER...
...IT WOULD BE A GREAT LOSS FOR ARCANA.

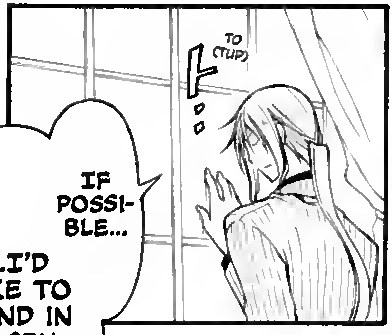


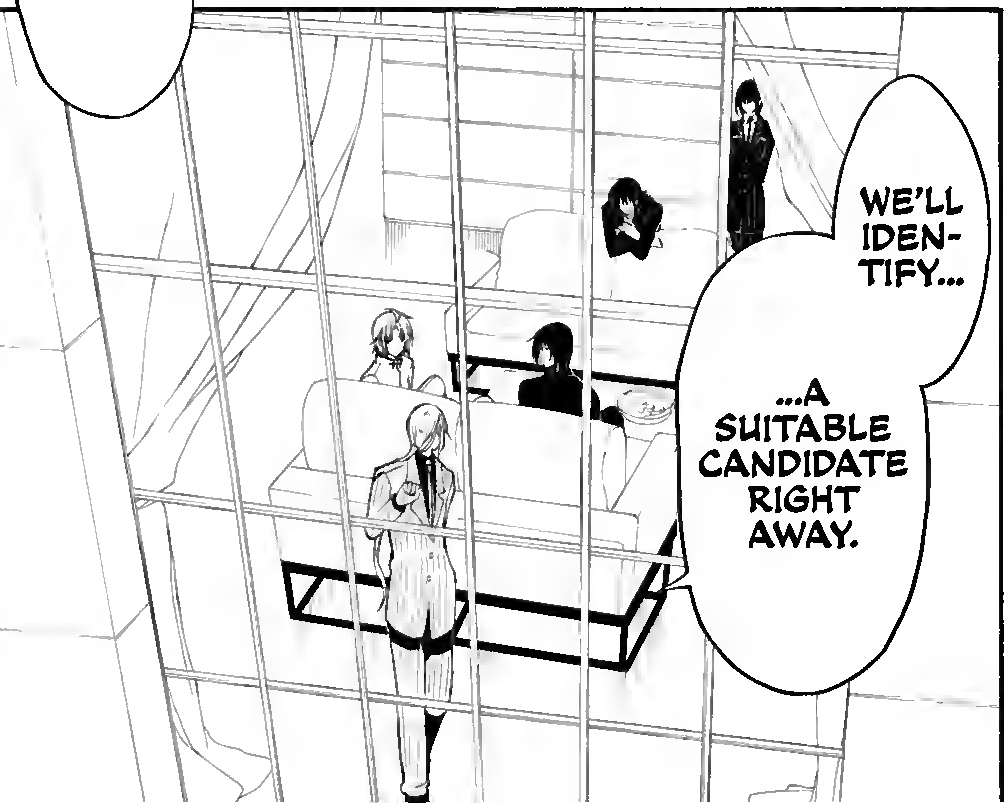
IT'S BLATANTLY OBVIOUS SOMETHING'S NAGGING AT THIS ONE.
NO POKER FACE AT ALL
.....

... THAT'S COLD
HMPH... I GUESS THEY WOULDN'T REVEAL THE CHALICE THAT EASILY, HUH.

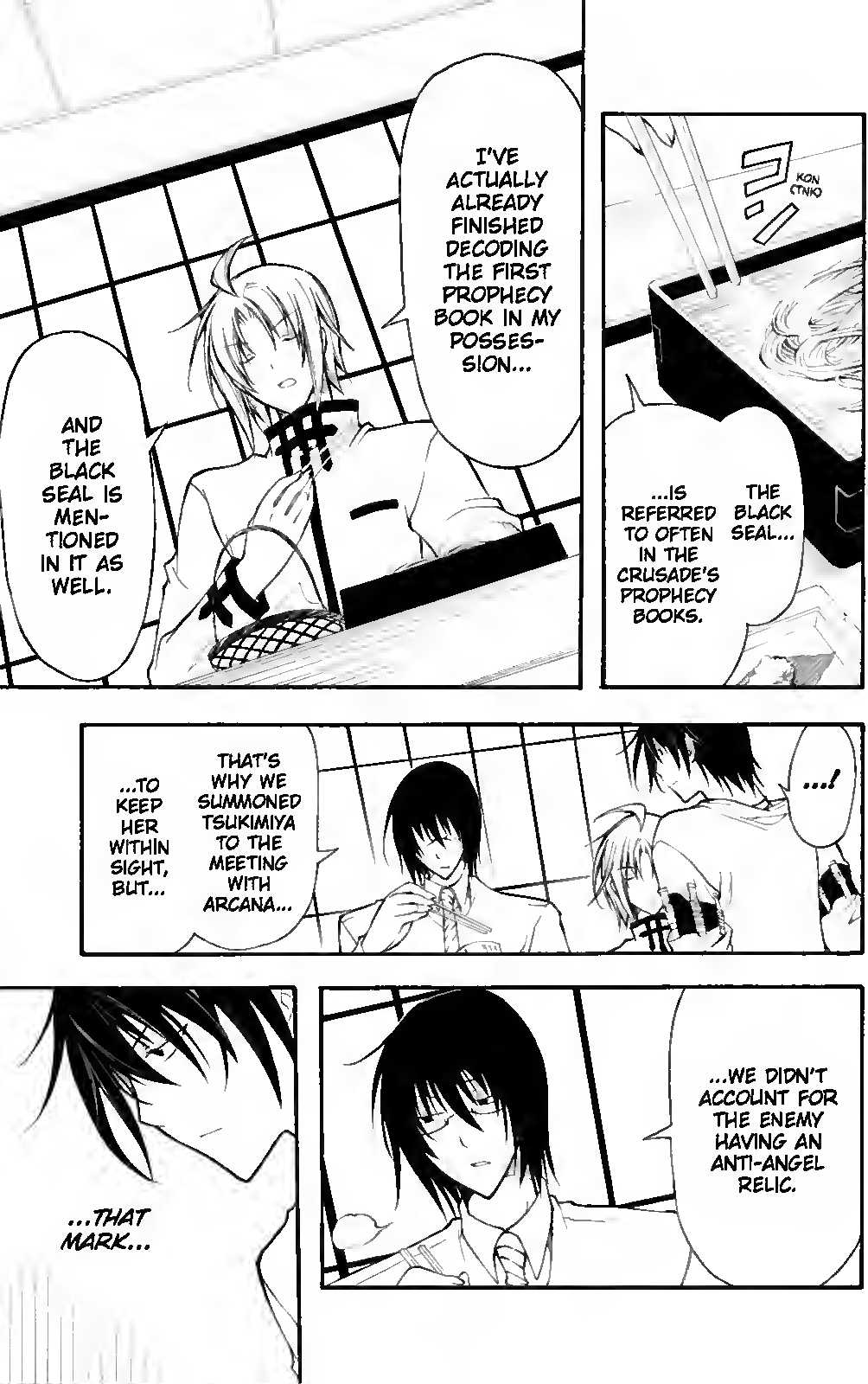
—WE'RE MAKING ARRANGE-MENTS TO RETRIEVE OUR STOLEN RELICS.
KOTSU (TOK)
WE INTEND TO TAKE A RATHER AGGRESSIVE APPROACH...
...SO WE'LL PLAN TO RESCUE HER AS WELL. HOW WOULD THAT BE?


BUT FIRST, WE NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE ENEMY.
KOTSU
KOTSU
THEIR ASSETS IN BATTLE, THE SIZE OF THEIR FORCE ...
DE-SCRIP-TIONS OF THE INTERIOR WOULD BE HELPFUL TOO.


TO (TUP)
IF POSSI-BLE...
...I'D LIKE TO SEND IN A SPY.


WE'LL IDEN-TIFY...
...A SUITABLE CANDIDATE RIGHT AWAY.

SIGN. OPEN / SOBA SHOP


I'VE ACTUALLY ALREADY FINISHED DECODING THE FIRST PROPHECY BOOK IN MY POSSES-SION...
AND THE BLACK SEAL IS MEN-TIONED IN IT AS WELL.
KON CTNIO
THE BLACK SEAL...
...IS REFERRED TO OFTEN IN THE CRUSADE'S PROPHECY BOOKS.
...!
THAT'S WHY WE SUMMONED TSUKIMIYA TO THE MEETING WITH ARCANA...
...TO KEEP HER WITHIN SIGHT, BUT...
...WE DIDN'T ACCOUNT FOR THE ENEMY HAVING AN ANTI-ANGEL RELIC.
...THAT MARK...

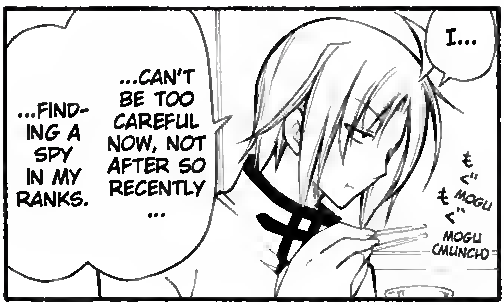
IT'S THAT RELEVANT TO THE CRUSADE?
SHE SAID IT WAS IN SATSUKI'S BOOK OF DA'AT TOO.
I TOUCHED IT ONCE TO INSERT A SPELL, BUT...
WELL...
...IT CERTAINLY HOLDS SOME SORT OF POWER, BUT...
...WHAT THE HECK IS IT?

IT'S THE EMBLEM OF A TYPE OF CONTRACT.

YES.
BE-TWEEN GODS.

CON-TRACT?

...SO THAT'S ALL I'M SAYING.
EX-CEPT...
...I DON'T TRUST YOU ANY FARTHER THAN THAT...


I...
...CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL NOW, NOT AFTER SO RECENTLY ...
...FINDING A SPY IN MY RANKS.
モグ
MOGU
MOGU CMUNCH

CAN'T GUARANTEE YOU WON'T BETRAY ME.
WHAT ...?
ずず
ZUZUZU (SLURRRP)

...COST ME THE HUGE BACKING OF ARCANA'S TRUST.
AND AFTER HELPING YOU OUT...
... THAT'S LOW...

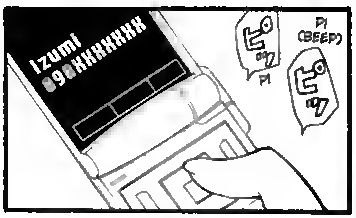
I RATE YOUR ABILITIES QUITE HIGHLY.
EH (SAD)

...OKAY, LET ME RE-PHRASE.

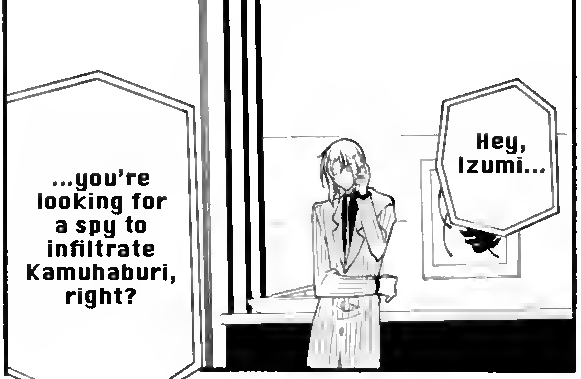
...SO I CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL WITH WHAT I KNOW.
AND I'M NOT SURE WHO'S TAKING NOTE OF MY WORDS AND ACTIONS...
ESPECIALLY ...
...OUT IN PUBLIC LIKE THIS.

INTEL GATHERING IS YOUR SPECIALTY, RIGHT?
GO HUNT DOWN THE ANSWER YOUR-SELF.

コツ
KOTSU (TOK)
KOTSU
コツ


Izumi
ピ
PI (BEEP)
PI

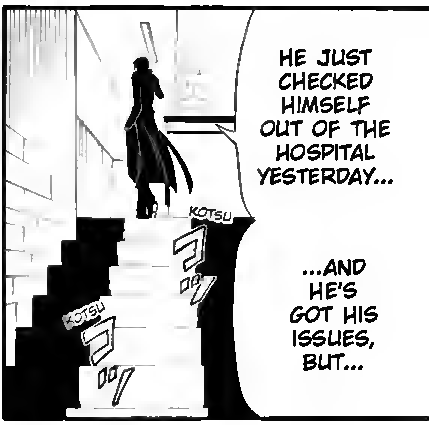
PLLL..
ピ
PU (BOOP)
...Hello?


Hey, Izumi...
...you're looking for a spy to infiltrate Kamuhaburi, right?

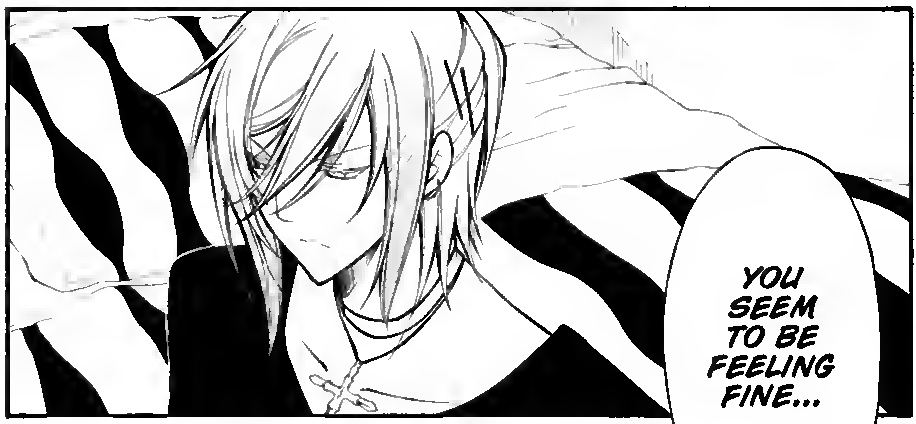
I'VE GOT SOMEONE IN MIND.

IZUMI?
SORRY TO CALL SO LATE.
...What do you want?
KOTSU
KOTSU
CTOIO

KOTSU
310
...HE'S A FAITHFUL DOG THAT'LL WORK HARD FOR YOU.
...AS LONG AS YOU COMPEN-SATE HIM RIGHT...
KOTSU
KOTSU


HE JUST CHECKED HIMSELF OUT OF THE HOSPITAL YESTERDAY...
...AND HE'S GOT HIS ISSUES, BUT...
KOTSU
KOTSU

I THOUGHT I'D CURRY FAVOR WITH YOU DIRECTLY.
WHY NOT TELL TSUZUKI?
IT REALLY IS A SHAME.
HE'S TALENTED, AND HE'S PRETTY SMART TOO.
JUST KID-DING.
I'M OFFERING HIM TO YOU 'COS I KNOW THE PUREBLOOD WON'T TAKE HIM.
GACHA (KACHAK)
.....
IF YOU'RE INTER-ESTED IN HIRING HIM...
...I CAN INTRO-DUCE YOU RIGHT AWAY.

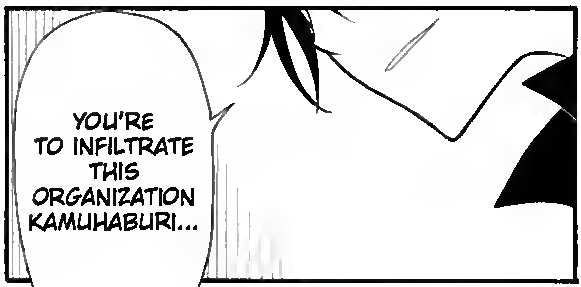


YOU SEEM TO BE FEELING FINE...

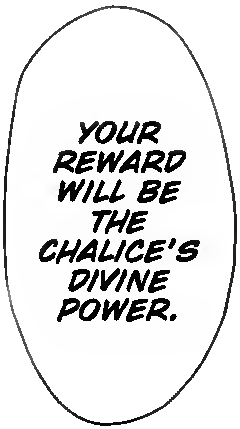
...MY FUGITIVE PATIENT.

YOU LITTLE BRAT.
GUI CHANKO
WHO DO YOU THINK RESCUED YOU FROM THE BRINK OF DEATH?
...DON'T IGNORE ME.

I MADE A DEAL WITH IZUMI FROM ARCANA.
I'VE GOT A NICE JOB OFFER FOR YOU.


YOU'RE TO INFILTRATE THIS ORGANIZATION KAMUHABURI...

...AND GET US WHATEVER INTEL YOU CAN ON THEM.


YOUR REWARD WILL BE THE CHALICE'S DIVINE POWER.

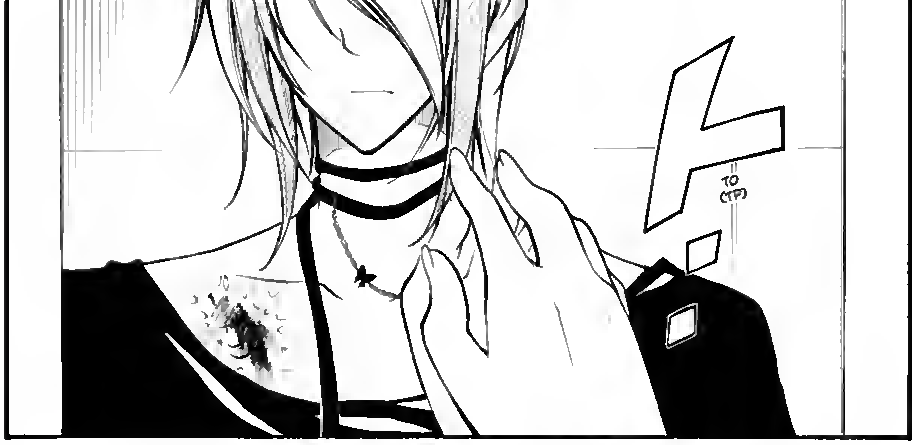
THAT WILL MAKE A CLEAN JOB...
...OF GETTING RID OF THIS HALF-GOUGED MIXED-RACE CURSE MARK...
...AFTER YOU BOTCHED IT UP SO BADLY.
IT'S A GOOD DEAL, NO?
I DON'T TRUST ANY "GOOD DEAL" OF YOURS.
TAKE IT.
IT'S BENEFICIAL FOR ME TOO.

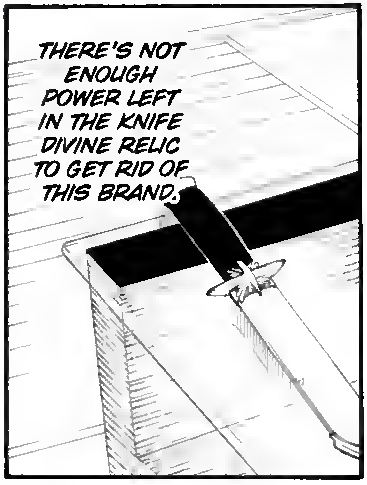
IZUMI ...
...HAS SEALED THE CHALICE INSIDE A HAND MIRROR THAT HE CARRIES WITH HIM.
TON (TAP)
WHEN IT COMES TIME TO ERASE YOUR CURSE MARK...
...HE'LL HAVE TO UNDO THE CHALICE'S SEAL AND MAKE IT APPEAR.
THAT'S WHEN I'LL STRIKE.
I WANT THE CHALICE.
GYU (CLENCH)
AND YOU...
...WANT TO UNDO THE CURSE FOR GOOD.

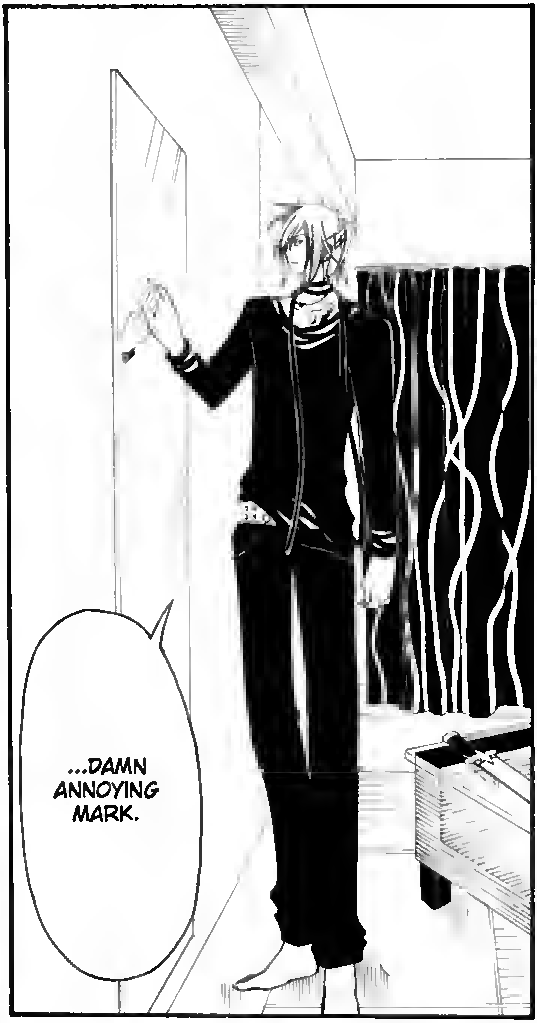
YOU'LL DO IT, RIGHT?
OR ELSE THE NEXT TIME YOU TRY SOMETHING ON THAT MIXED-RACE CURSE...
...YOU'LL BE KILLED.
YOU REALLY ARE A PAIN IN THE ASS.
ARRRGH!! MY BELLY...!
IT HURTS SOOO BAD... UNH!
GNH... AH...
AH.
GYURU (GURGLE)
...AND OVERLOADED MY SENSITIVE STOMACH ...!!
THE TROPICAL MILK, TEMPURA, AND SOBA... CLASHED...
.....
IDIOT.

BLOODY CROSS

BLOODY CROSS


TO (TP)

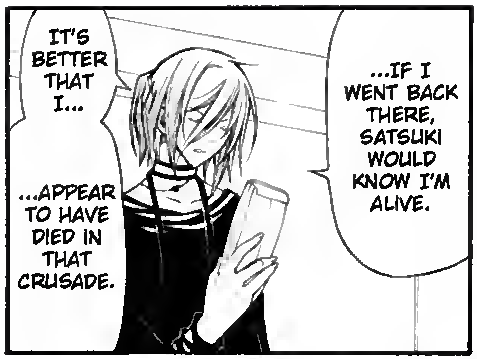

THERE'S NOT ENOUGH POWER LEFT IN THE KNIFE DIVINE RELIC TO GET RID OF THIS BRAND.

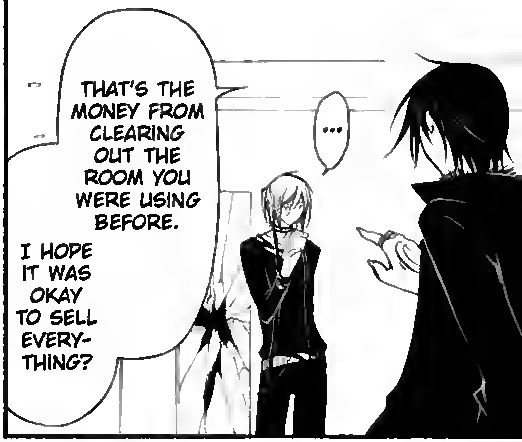

...DAMN ANNOYING MARK.

...THAT SAVED ME FROM DEATH.
THAT DAY... IT WAS PROBABLY THE PROTECTION OF THIS KNIFE'S DIVINE POWER...

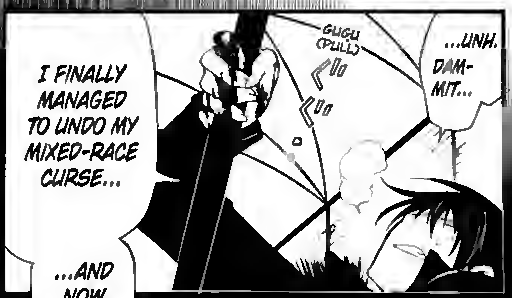
I CAN'T USE THAT METHOD AGAIN.
MY BODY KNOWS IT WILL DIE... IF I TRY IT A SECOND TIME.
...TCH.
GIRI (GRIT)
DAN (SLAM)
IS MY ONLY CHOICE TO PUT MYSELF AT HINATA'S MERCY...?
Chapter 28
In the Darkness

AW, DON'T BE SUCH A GROUCH.
YOU MERELY WENT FROM BEING SATSUKI'S LACKEY...
...TO BEING MINE. NO BIG DEAL.
.....
...EVEN IF THIS PLACE IS ONE OF YOUR HIDEOUTS...
HM?
...
...SINCE I'M LIVING HERE NOW...
...DON'T JUST BARGE IN UNINVITED, GOT IT?
OH.
SO YOU ARE AWARE THAT YOU'RE MY TENANT?
YOU'LL BE REIMBURSING ME FOR THAT MIRROR
PASH! (WHAP)
HERE.


IT'S BETTER THAT I...
...APPEAR TO HAVE DIED IN THAT CRUSADE.
...IF I WENT BACK THERE, SATSUKI WOULD KNOW I'M ALIVE.


THAT'S THE MONEY FROM CLEARING OUT THE ROOM YOU WERE USING BEFORE.
I HOPE IT WAS OKAY TO SELL EVERYTHING?
...

THAT CRUSADE... HUH.
...WELL, YOU CERTAINLY SHOULD HAVE DIED...
... GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES—


I FINALLY MANAGED TO UNDO MY MIXED-RACE CURSE...
GUGU (PULL)
...UNH. DAMMIT...

...AND NOW THIS?
HYU (SWISH)
I AIN'T... DYING HERE...!!

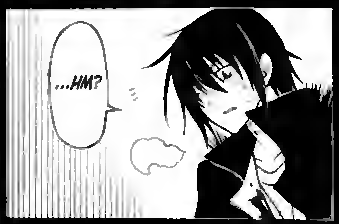
ACTI-VATE!
ZUPU (ZEWUP)
KOO (WHOOO)
RISE.
ZURU (DRAG)
UNH ...
...STOP BLEED-ING.
KII (CRE-N)
I'LL GET A LACKEY TO DO SHIT LIKE THIS...
...AND JUST GIVE INSTRUCTIONS FROM SOME WHERE SAFE... SERIOUSLY.
HUFF ...
THAT'S IT... I'M DONE DOING EVERYTHING MYSELF.
MAN, MY VISION'S ALL BLURRY.
OH...
MAYBE I SHOULD PRETEND TO BE DEAD TOO...

...AH...
JUST FOUND THE PERFECT LACKEY CANDIDATE.

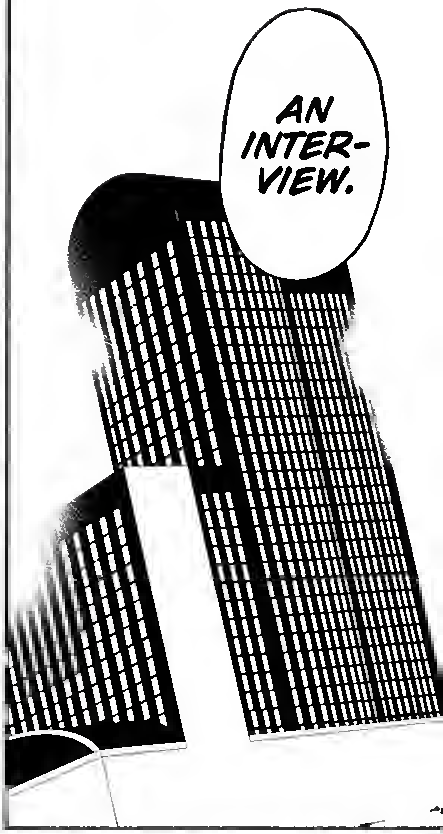
HE'S JUST BARELY ALIVE...
...EVEN AFTER FALLING FROM SO HIGH...LUCKY BASTARD.
THAT CLOSE TO BITING IT, THOUGH.
JARI (CRUNCH)

THIS WOUND...
HE...TRIED TO GOUGE OUT HIS OWN CURSE MARK?

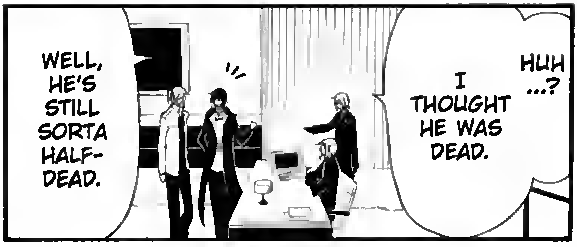
I'LL DO AS MUCH FIRST AID AS I CAN FOR NOW...
...BUT DON'T HAUNT ME IF YOU DON'T MAKE IT.
KOCOO (WHOO)
STOP BLEEDING.

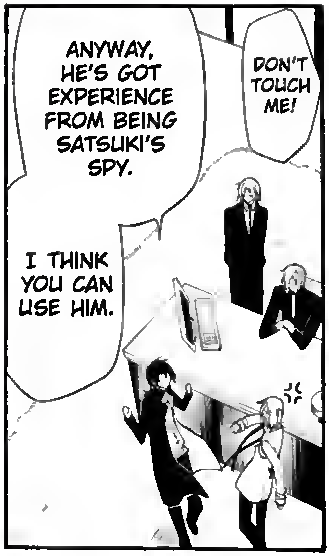

...HM?

IF HE'D HAD A LITTLE MORE NERVE...
...HE MIGHT HAVE FREED HIMSELF.
...BUT THE MARK HASN'T BEEN FULLY ERASED.
WHAT AN IDIOT.
TCH.
I AM SO KIND AND GENER-OUS!
...I'VE EVEN LINED UP A JOB FOR YOU THAT'LL GET RID OF WHAT'S LEFT OF THAT MARK FOR GOOD!
ESPE-CIALLY SINCE ...
— WELL ...
...IF I HADN'T CARRIED YOU TO THE HOSPITAL AFTER THAT, YOU DEFINITELY WOULD'VE DIED.
THAT MERITS A LITTLE GRATI-TUDE.
I JUST REMEM-BERED...
...OH, RIGHT.
YOU WANNA CLEAN UP A BIT?
WE GOTTA HEAD OUT.
...HUH? TO WHERE?


AN INTER-VIEW.

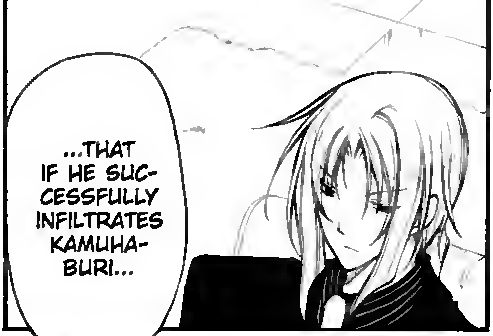
.....
...I SEE.
SO HE'S YOUR SPY RECOM-MENDA-TION IS HE.

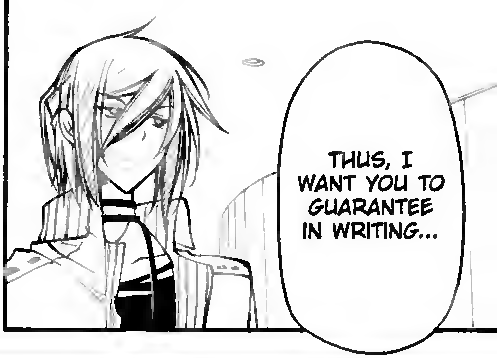

HUH ...?
I THOUGHT HE WAS DEAD.
WELL, HE'S STILL SORTA HALF-DEAD.


DON'T TOUCH ME!
ANYWAY, HE'S GOT EXPERIENCE FROM BEING SATSUKI'S SPY.
I THINK YOU CAN USE HIM.

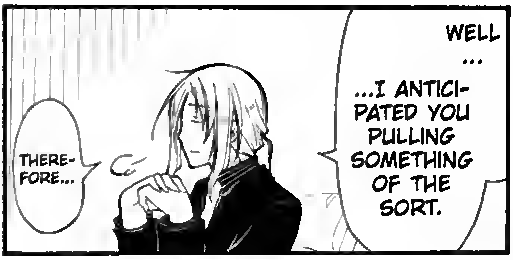
SEE?
GUI (TUG)
HE FAILED TO GET RID OF HIS MIXED-RACE CURSE ...
!
...SO HE'LL DIE IF HE DOES NOTH-ING.
WHAT A DUMMY, RIGHT?

YOU'RE RIGHT. IT'S OFTEN BEST TO GO WITH SOMEONE YOU KNOW.
THAT YOU'RE BACKING HIM IS A BIT STICKY...
...BUT I THINK WE CAN OVER-LOOK THAT.
...HM?
SOMETHING BOTHERS ME ABOUT THAT PHRASING
PEOPLE EVERY-WHERE HATE YOU.
SHAD-DUP.
...WELL, NEVER MIND
SINCE HE'S PASSED THE INTERVIEW WITH FLYING COLORS...
...IZUMI...
YES?
PIRA (WAVE)
...WOULD YOU MIND...
...SIGNING THIS CON-TRACT?
FOR HIS REWARD, OF COURSE!
I MEAN... HIS LIFE'S AT STAKE HERE, Y'KNOW!?
.....
WHAT FOR?
IT'D BE JUST AWFUL IF YOU COME BACK LATER AND SAY...
..."I CAN'T GIVE YOU DIVINE POWER AFTER ALL."


...THAT IF HE SUCCESSFULLY INFILTRATES KAMUHABURI...


THUS, I WANT YOU TO GUARANTEE IN WRITING...

...YOU'LL USE THE DIVINE POWER OF ARCANA'S CHALICE...
...TO UNDO NAO'S MIXED-RACE CURSE.


WELL...
...I ANTICIPATED YOU PULLING SOMETHING OF THE SORT.
THEREFORE...

BY THE WAY, THIS IS A CONTRACT BOUND BY A SPELL.
NIFTY, AIN'T IT?
IT'S SET UP SO THAT A SUITABLE REVERSAL OCCURS IF YOU BREAK IT.

YES.

CONDITION?
...I'D LIKE TO ADD ON A CONDITION MYSELF.
...TO EVEN THINGS OUT...

THIS MISSION TO PENETRATE KAMUHA-BURI...
...YOU TO GO TOO, HINATA.
I'D LIKE ...
BI (POINT)
...HUH?
I'M A BIT UNEASY, YOU SEE.
THAT PERHAPS...
...SOME-ONE'S HIRED YOU TO DECEIVE US... AGAIN.
OUR TERMS: "IF YOU COM-PLETE THE MISSION TOGETH-ER...
"...WE WILL PROVIDE NAO WITH DIVINE POWER ...
..."AND ADE-QUATELY COM-PENSATE HINATA." ...HOW'S THAT?
... YOU SEE ...

WHA...!?
IS THAT ACCEPT-ABLE?

HEY, YOU GOTTA BE JOK—
SOLD!
O
K
I WAS FEELING PRETTY PUT OUT THAT I WOULD BE THE ONE TAKING ALL THE RISKS!!
NIYARI (SMIRK)
PAKU (GAPE)
PAKU

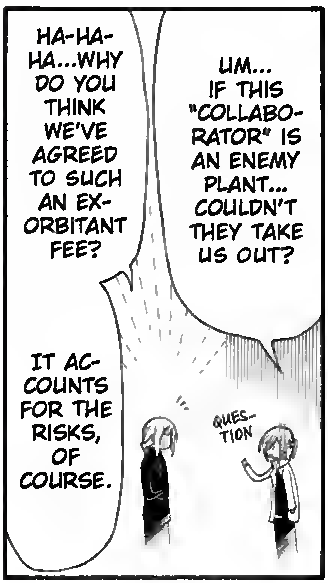
IN SHORT, I'D LIKE YOU TWO...
...TO MONITOR ONE ANOTHER AND PREVENT ANY FUNNY BUSINESS.
...THAT'S THE DEAL.

...I'M GLAD WE'RE ALL AGREED.
SO I'LL PUT IN THE ADDENDUM HERE...
...AND SIGN IT.
KOO (WHOO)
GUWA (WHOOSH)

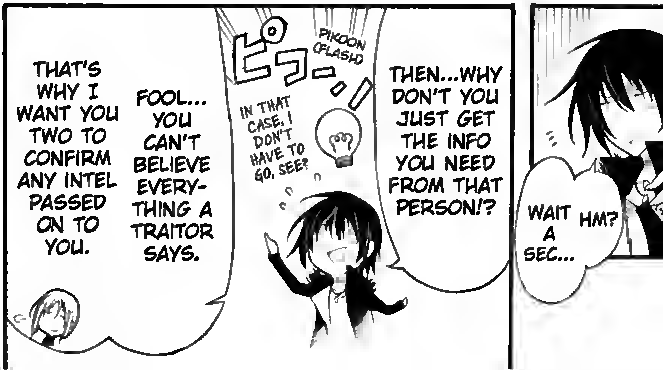
...NH!
WHAT'S THIS...?
GOOD-NESS... YOU'RE RIGHT.
...IT'S ALMOST TIME, YOUR EXCEL-LENCY.
...
THAT'S MY LINE, FOOL.
GAAH... WHAT A CRUEL TURN.
MY ROLE AS MASTER-MIND
FARE-WELL, MY PLANS.
ALL THREE OF US HAVE ONE
...A SYMBOL OF OUR CON-TRACT.
IT'LL VANISH ONCE IT'S FUL-FILLED.
GEEZ.
NO.
AND REAL INCON-SIDER-ATE
YOUR NEXT APPOINT-MENT? YOU'RE SO BUSY, BOSS.
HUH?
WHAT'S BUSY IS YOUR SCHEDULE, YOU TWO.

THAT PERSON...
...WILL ASSIST YOU WITH FITTING IN AND PROVIDING INTEL BACK TO US.
...THE COOPERATION OF A KAMUHABURI OFFICER FOR YOUR TASK.
AS IT HAPPENS, WE'VE ALREADY PURCHASED AND SECURED...


LEAVE IT TO ARCANA ...
!
WHAT A GREAT GUY!
WHOA ...!

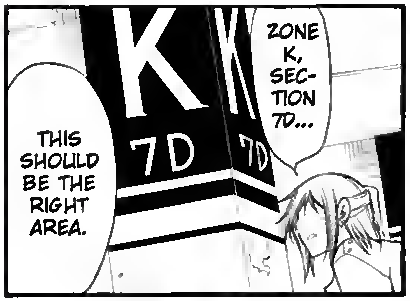

HA-HA-HA...WHY DO YOU THINK WE'VE AGREED TO SUCH AN EXORBITANT FEE?
UM... IF THIS "COLLABORATOR" IS AN ENEMY PLANT... COULDN'T THEY TAKE US OUT?
IT ACCOUNTS FOR THE RISKS, OF COURSE.
QUESTION

WHAT !?
GAAAN (SHOCK)
OH, AND DON'T USE A TELEPORTATION SPELL. IT'S TOO FLASHY
AT A LOCATION THAT'S TEN MINUTES AWAY AT A RUN...
...AND WE HAVE ONLY FIVE MINUTES UNTIL YOUR RENDEZVOUS WITH SAID COLLABORATOR.

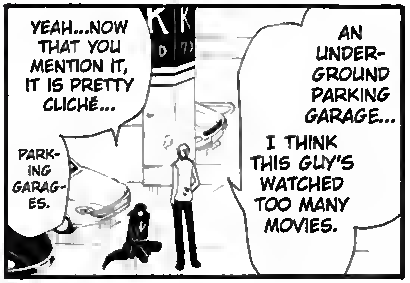

THAT'S WHY I WANT YOU TWO TO CONFIRM ANY INTEL PASSED ON TO YOU.
FOOL... YOU CAN'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING A TRAITOR SAYS.
PIKOON (FLASH)
IN THAT CASE, I DON'T HAVE TO GO, SEE?
THEN...WHY DON'T YOU JUST GET THE INFO YOU NEED FROM THAT PERSON!?
WAIT A SEC... HM?

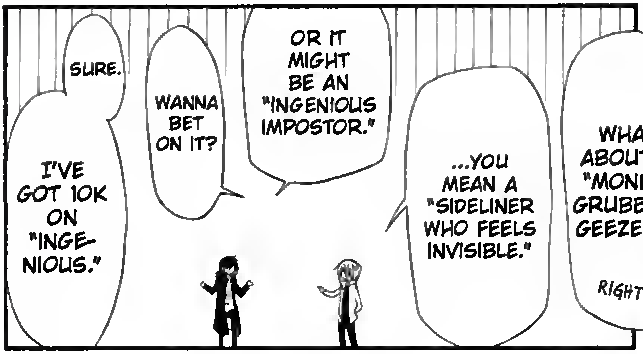
C'MON! GET MOVING, HINATA!
DA DASH
I KNEW MY LUCK WAS ROTTEN!
WAAH, THIS IS TOTALLY THE WORST DEAL EVER!
I DON'T WANNA GO
UNNH ...
DAMMIT... FINE, I'M COMING!
JUST YOU WATCH, ARCANA IDIOTS! I'LL REACH IT IN FIVE!
ENOUGH.
THIS PAPER CONTAINS THE MEETING TIME AND LOCATION
AND HE'S SET US ADRIFT.
YOU'RE AN OGRE!
AND FOR NO REASON!
YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS, IZUMI!
CAN'T TRUST A ONE OF THEM.
TWO SPIES... AND AN ALLY WHO BETRAYS THEIR ORGANIZATION FOR MONEY.
— MAKINO-KUN...
SHADOW THE TWO OF THEM.
..... YES, SIR.
THEY MIGHT CONSPIRE TOGETHER TO PLOT SOMETHING.

UNDER-
STOOD,
YOUR...
...EXCEL-
LENCY.


ZONE
K,
SEC-
TION
7D...
THIS
SHOULD
BE THE
RIGHT
AREA.

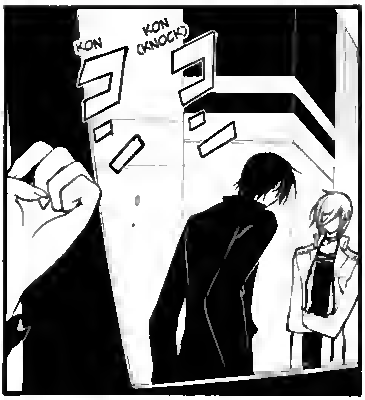
I HATE JOBS
THAT PUT
MY LIFE AT
RISK
HFF...
HFF...
W-WE
MADE IT
IZUMI,
YOU
BAS-
TARD...
HAHK
...

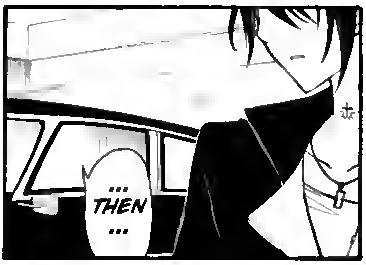

YEAH...NOW
THAT YOU
MENTION IT,
IT IS PRETTY
CLICHÉ...
PARK-
ING
GARAG-
ES.
AN
UNDER-
GROUND
PARKING
GARAGE...
I THINK
THIS GUY'S
WATCHED
TOO MANY
MOVIES.

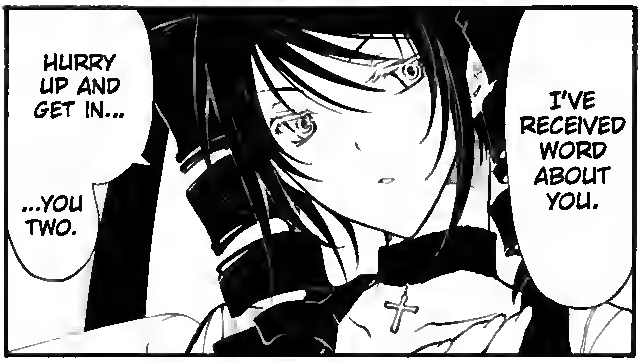

SURE.
I'VE
GOT 10K
ON
"INGE-
NIOUS."
WANNA
BET
ON IT?
OR IT
MIGHT
BE AN
"INGENIOUS
IMPOSTOR."
...YOU
MEAN A
"SIDELINER
WHO FEELS
INVISIBLE."
WHAT
ABOUT A
"MONEY-
GRUBBING
GEEZER"?
RIGHT?
...
HMM
...

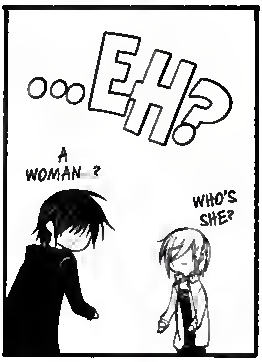
IS HE
HERE
ALREADY?
...THIS
TRAI-
TOROUS
OFFICER
IS.
I
WONDER
WHAT
KIND OF
PERSON
...
OOF

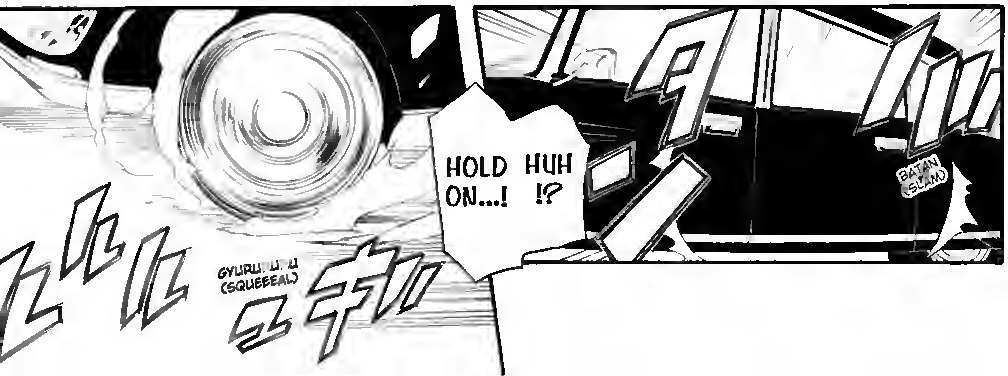
...I SHALL BET...
...THIRTY MILLION ON A "BEAUTY WHO'S LOST ALL HOPE IN THE WORLD."


KON
KON (KNOCK)

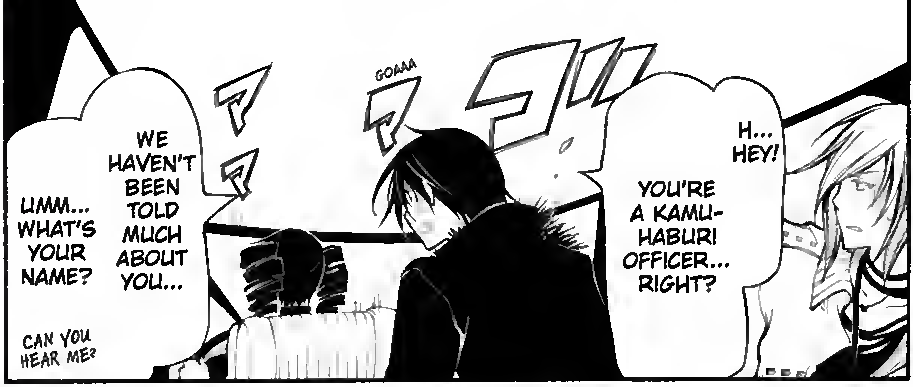

... THEN ...


HURRY UP AND GET IN...
...YOU TWO.
I'VE RECEIVED WORD ABOUT YOU.

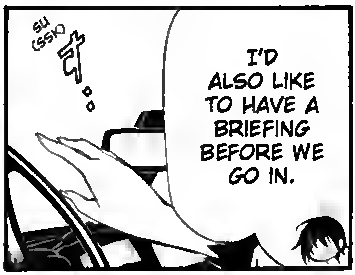

...EH?
A WOMAN ?
WHO'S SHE?


HOLD ON...!
HUH !?
BATAN (SLAM)
GYURU (SQUEEEAL)

HUUUH!?
NO EXPLA-
NATION?
NOT EVEN A
GREETING?
HUUUH
!!?
GOO
(VROOMO
BUO
(VRIM)
GYUUUU
(VWEE)
URK!
I'M
GONNA
HURL!
GOAAA
(VRWAM)
HEY!
WHY
...
GOGYA
(SKREECH)
GYA
KYA
GYA
AA
(VWA)
...ARE YOU
DRIVING
LIKE THIS
IS A CAR
CHASE!!?

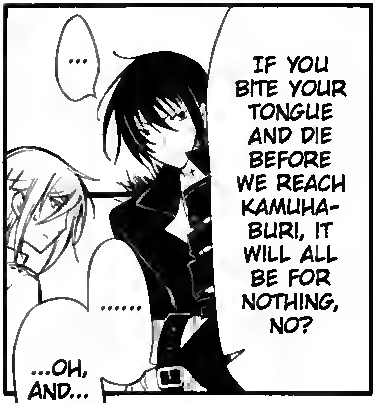

GOAAA
H... HEY!
YOU'RE A KAMU-HABURI OFFICER... RIGHT?
WE HAVEN'T BEEN TOLD MUCH ABOUT YOU...
UMM... WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
CAN YOU HEAR ME?

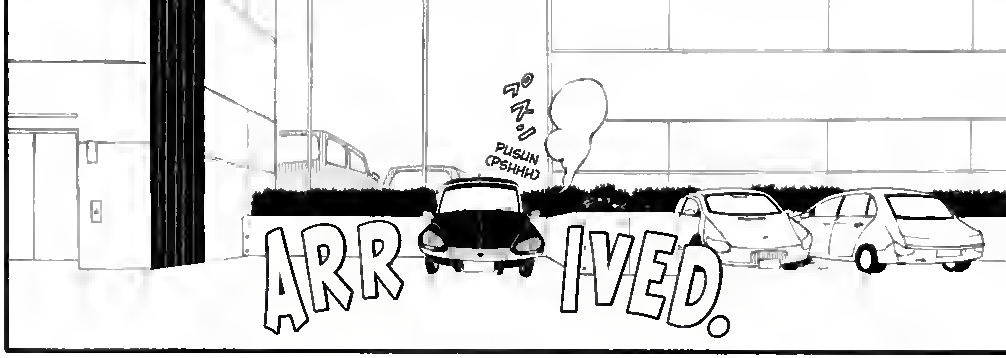
I'VE BEEN GIVEN A ROUGH OVERVIEW ALREADY.
SH
RELAX AND BE QUIET.


SU (SSH)
I'D ALSO LIKE TO HAVE A BRIEFING BEFORE WE GO IN.

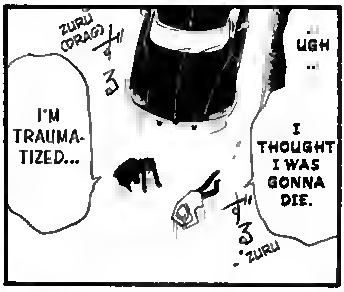
YOU'RE HINATA...
...AND YOU'RE NAO.

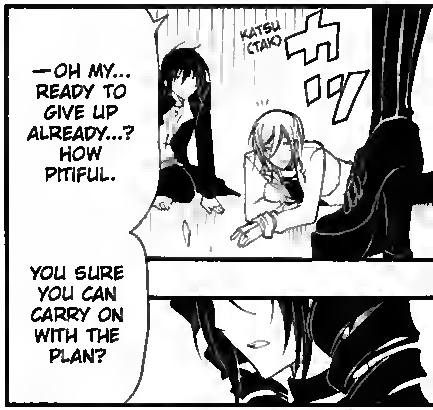
GOGYA
SHE'S GONNA FLOOR IT!!!
...YOU MAY WANT TO FASTEN YOUR SEAT-BELTS.
GYA
NOOO!! LEMME OUT!!
GYA

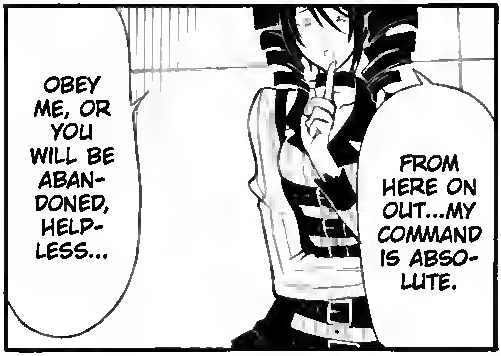

...
IF YOU BITE YOUR TONGUE AND DIE BEFORE WE REACH KAMUHA-BURI, IT WILL ALL BE FOR NOTHING, NO?
.....
...OH, AND...


PUSUN (PSHHH)
ARRIVED.

SU (SSK)
I AM KANADE.
I CAPTAIN KAMUHA-BURI'S UNIT SIX.
...ALLOW ME TO FORMALLY INTRODUCE MYSELF.

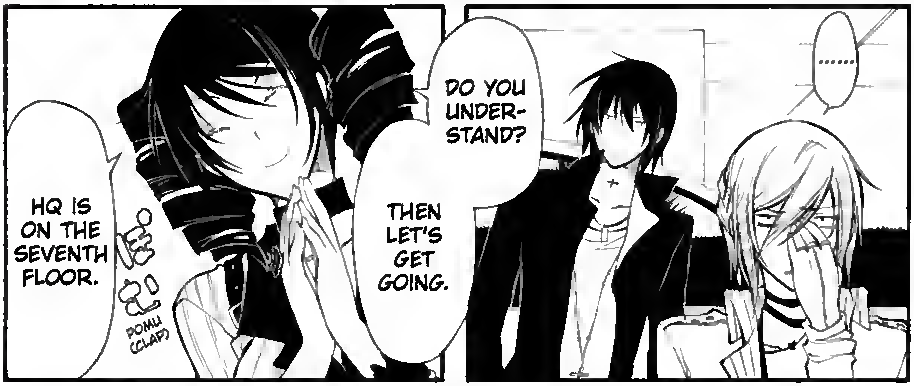

ZURU (DRAG)
UGH..
I'M TRAUMA-TIZED...
I THOUGHT I WAS GONNA DIE.
ZURU


KATSU (TAK)
—OH MY... READY TO GIVE UP ALREADY...? HOW PITIFUL.
YOU SURE YOU CAN CARRY ON WITH THE PLAN?

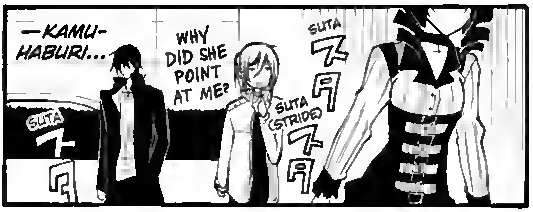

OBEY ME, OR YOU WILL BE ABAN-DONED, HELP-LESS...
FROM HERE ON OUT...MY COMMAND IS ABSO-LUTE.

STARTING THIS MOMENT...
...YOU'LL BE POSING AS MY SUBOR-DINATES.

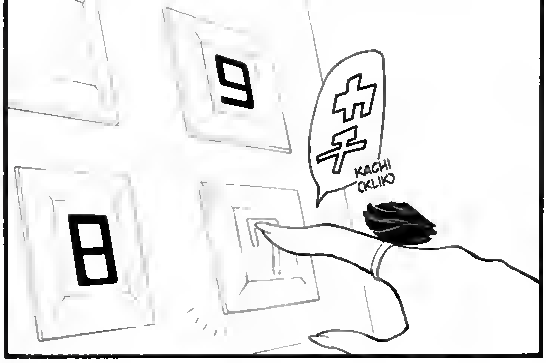
...DEAD.
...THAT'S HOW YOU SHOULD SEE IT.
ZUBI (POKE)
ズビ
IN SHORT ...

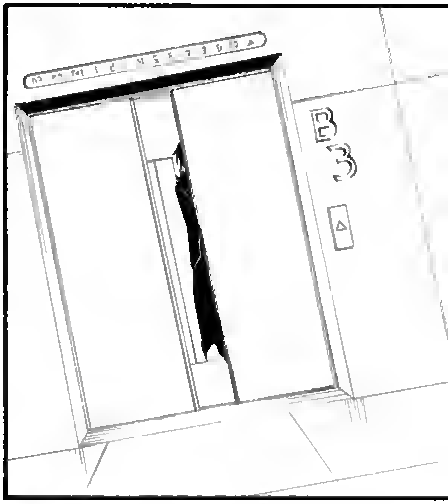

HQ IS ON THE SEVENTH FLOOR.
POMU (CLAP)
DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
THEN LET'S GET GOING.
.....

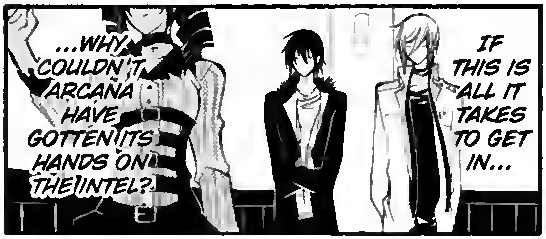
WHEN WE GET UPSTAIRS, YOU'LL HAVE TO CHANGE YOUR CLOTHES FIRST THING.
... AH ...

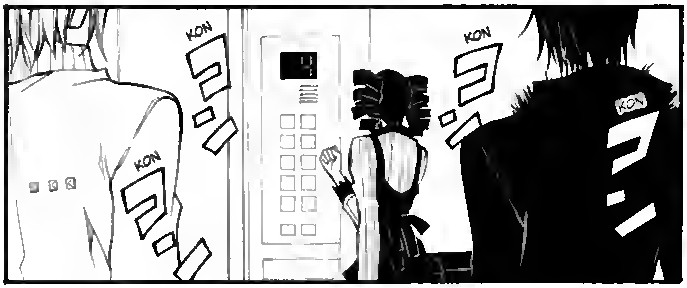

—KAMU-HABURI...
WHY DID SHE POINT AT ME?
SUTA
SUTA (STRIDE)
SUTA

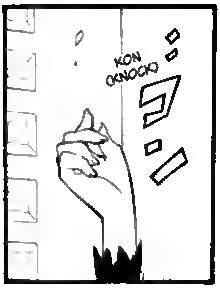
...SO I THOUGHT THERE'D BE SOMETHING SPECIAL TO IT... BUT WE GOT HERE IN A PRETTY TYPICAL WAY.
WAIT A SEC, WE NEVER DID THE BRIEFING
THE GROUP CLAIMS TO MANAGE THE CRUSADES...


KACHI
CKLIKO

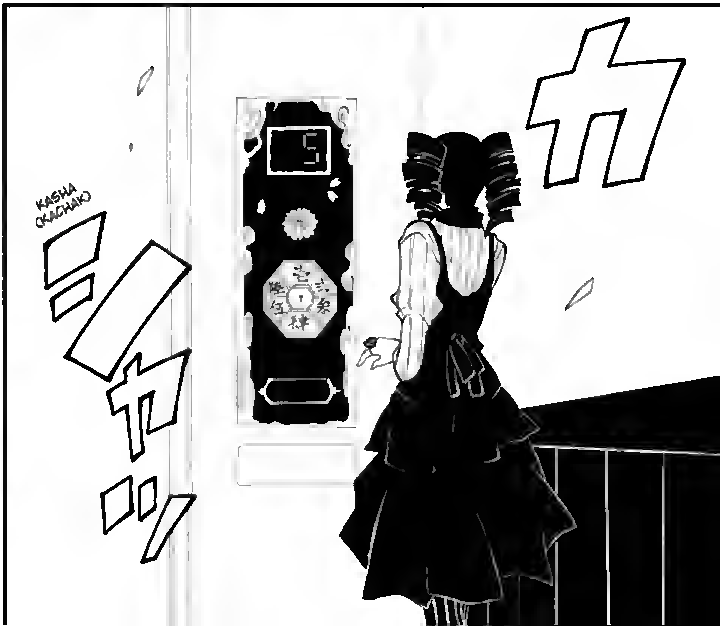



...WHY COULDN'T ARCANA HAVE GOTTEN ITS HANDS ON THE INTEL?
IF THIS IS ALL IT TAKES TO GET IN...


KON
KON
KON


KON
KNOCK

...JUST A LITTLE BIT.
HANG ON...
...HUH?


KASHA
CKACHAK

KACHIRI (KACHING)
TON (TAP)
TON
TON
POOOON (DIIIING)
WHAT ... THE ...!?
PA (FLIP)
UNLOCKED
... WELL ...
...WE'VE ARRIVED.
GAA (VMM)

...TO KAMU-HABURI'S STRONG-HOLD.
WEL-COME...
.....
WHERE IS THIS PLACE ...?
THIS DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THE INSIDE OF A BUILDING.
DID IT CONNECT THE ELEVATOR TO SOME ALTERNATE DIMENSION?
THAT WEIRD TASK SHE PER-FORMED JUST NOW...
...THIS WOMAN...

WEL-
COME...

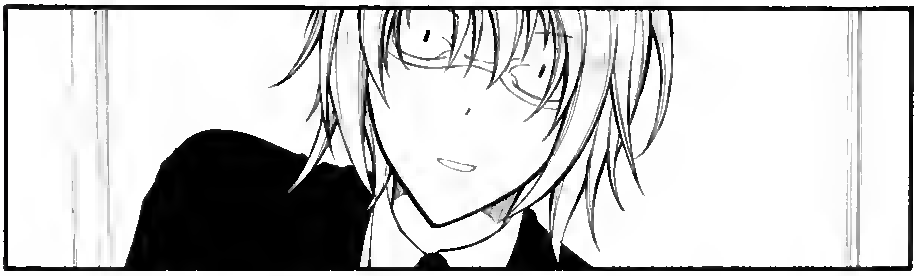
...TO KAMU-HABURI'S STRONG-HOLD.
THIS DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THE INSIDE OF A BUILDING.
WHERE IS THIS PLACE ...?
.....
DID IT CONNECT THE ELEVATOR TO SOME ALTERNATE DIMENSION?
THAT WEIRD TASK SHE PER-FORMED JUST NOW...
...THIS WOMAN...

...IS WHY ARCANA COULDN'T LOCATE KAMU-HABURI...
SO THIS...
...HA.

KATSU (TAK)
...HMM.
THE ELEVATOR THEY TOOK HAS STOPPED...
...ON FLOOR SEVEN.

I DON'T... SEE ANY STAIRS ANYWHERE.
KYORO (GLANCE)
GUESS I'LL HAVE TO USE THE ELEVATOR... HUH.
WELL, IT CAN'T BE HELPED.
VERY WELL.
POCHI (CLICK)
SEVEN...
THERE.
...ESPECIALLY NOT IN A MULTI-TENANT BUILDING WITH NO SECURITY AGAINST INTRUDERS.
ORGANIZATIONS LIKE THEIRS AREN'T USUALLY SET UP THIS WAY
IT'LL BE BAD IF KAMUHABURI AGENTS ARE RIGHT THERE WHEN I GET OFF, BUT
(VWEE)
IN FACT, CONSIDERING THEY DID THE UNTHINKABLE AND RAIDED ARCANA, THIS IS A PRETTY SEEDY SETUP.
OH, KAMUHABURI...THE REALITY IS SO DIFFERENT. I COULD ALMOST CRY.
I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW EASILY I'VE REACHED YOUR HEADQUARTERS.
...NOW, THEN, WHAT TO DO IF I RUN INTO KAMUHABURI WHILE TAILING THE SPIES?
POOON (PING)
I THINK THE USUAL SOLUTION...
...DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE, WILL HAVE TO DO.
GAAAA (WHERE)

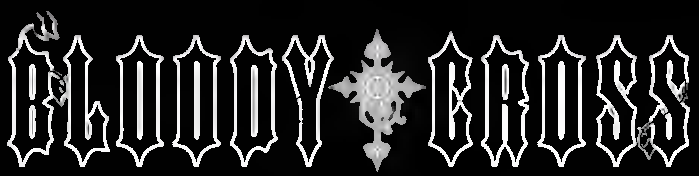
ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS WITH A MAID!
NEW MENU ITEM GALAPAGOS SODA
WELCOME HOME...
...MASTER!
MAID CAFÉ GALAPAGOS
WELCOME HOME!



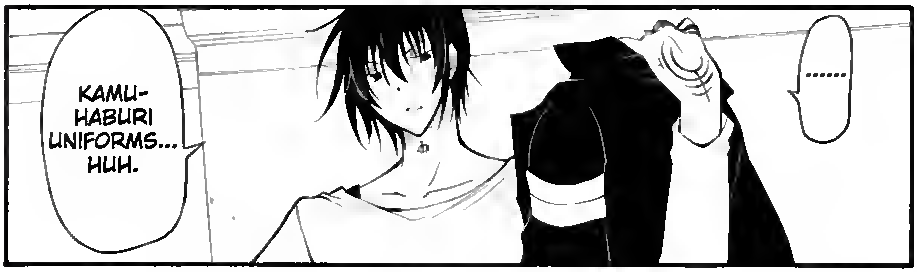
HUH...?
THIS IS FLOOR SEVEN ...
... RIGHT ...?

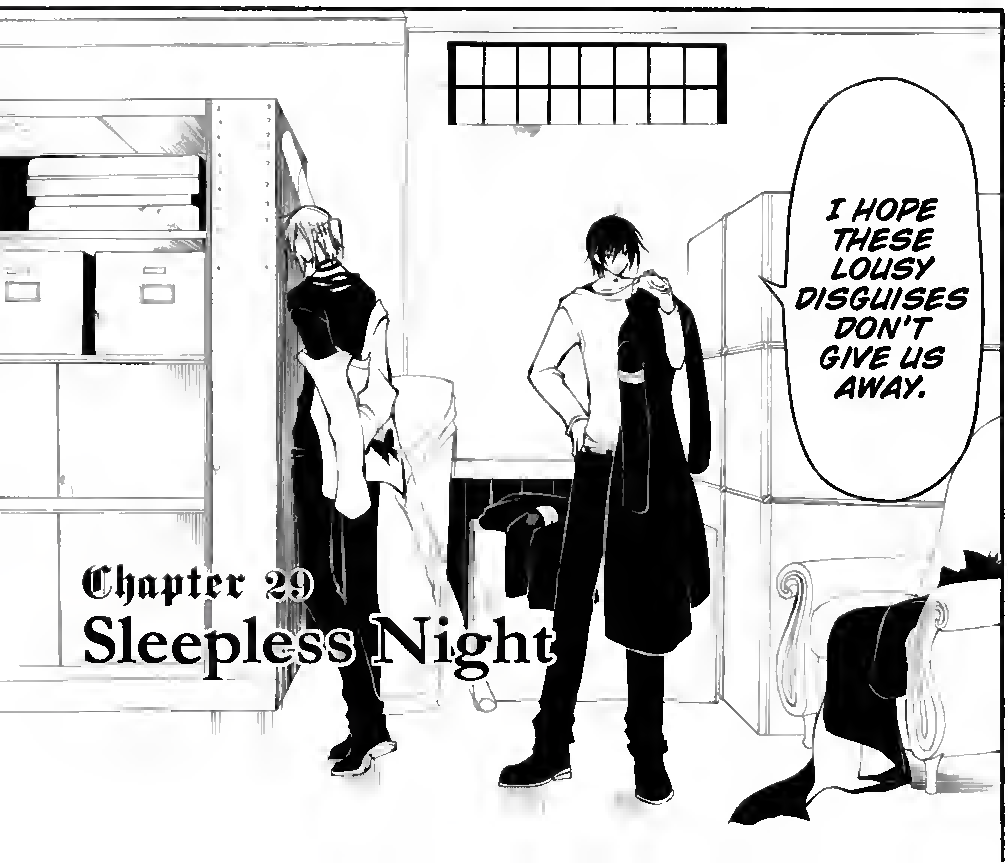
... EH?

UH...
.....
.....
.....

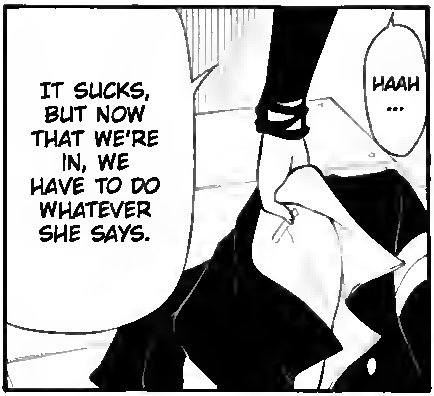

BLOODY CROSS

BLOODY CROSS

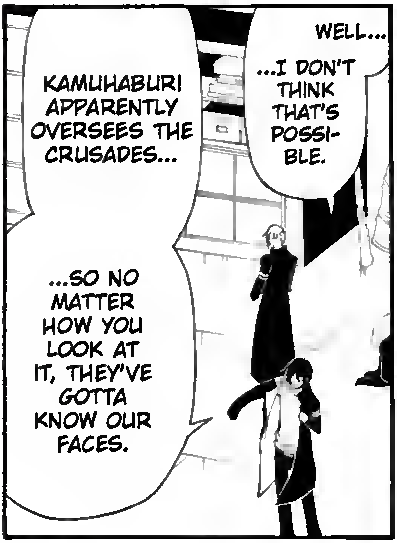



# Chapter 29
# Sleepless Night

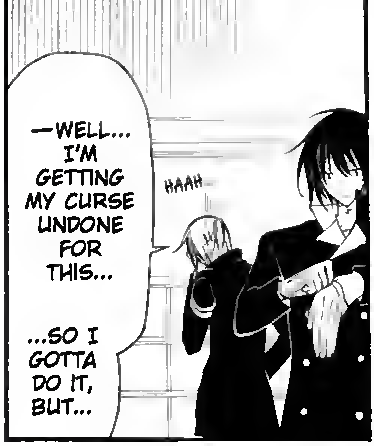

HAAH...
IT SUCKS, BUT NOW THAT WE'RE IN, WE HAVE TO DO WHATEVER SHE SAYS.

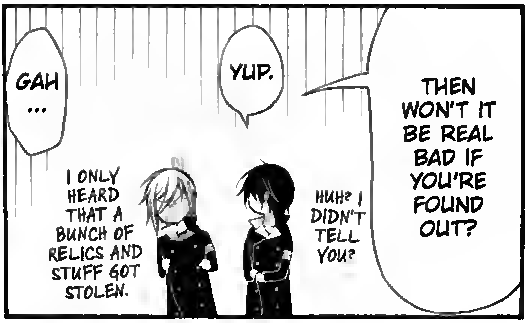
HEY, WHERE'D THAT KANADE PERSON GO?
HM?
SHE SAID SHE WAS GONNA CHANGE SOMEWHERE ELSE.


WELL...
...I DON'T THINK THAT'S POSSIBLE.
KAMUHABURI APPARENTLY OVERSEES THE CRUSADES...
...SO NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, THEY'VE GOTTA KNOW OUR FACES.

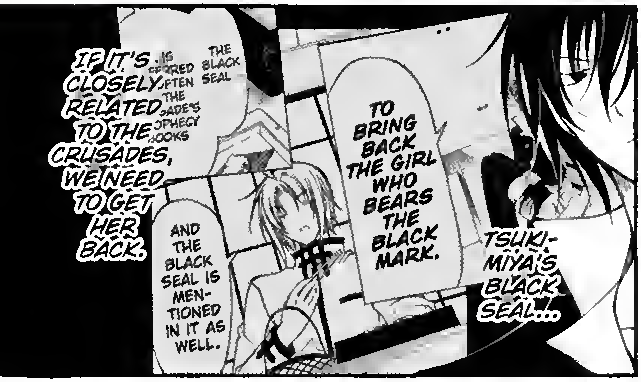
ORDINARILY...
(PHD)
...WE'D TAKE THE TIME TO WORK OUR WAY IN AS RECRUITS.

PLUS, I JUST FOUGHT THEM AT ARCANA THE OTHER DAY...
WHAT!?
FIRST TIME HEARING


—WELL... I'M GETTING MY CURSE UNDONE FOR THIS...
...SO I GOTTA DO IT, BUT...
HAAH


GAH...
YUP.
THEN WON'T IT BE REAL BAD IF YOU'RE FOUND OUT?
I ONLY HEARD THAT A BUNCH OF RELICS AND STUFF GOT STOLEN.
HUH? I DIDN'T TELL YOU?

...DETAILED INTEL ON KAMUHABURI AND THE STOLEN RELICS.
WE'RE TO BRING BACK...
...SO THAT ARCANA WILL BE ABLE TO ATTACK IT.
IN ANY CASE, OUR JOB IS TO SCOUT KAMUHABURI...


IF IT'S CLOSELY RELATED TO THE CRUSADES, WE NEED TO GET HER BACK.
IS RECORDED IN THE JADE'S OPHECY BOOKS
THE BLACK SEAL
AND THE BLACK SEAL IS MENTIONED IN IT AS WELL.
TO BRING BACK THE GIRL WHO BEARS THE BLACK MARK.
TSUKIMIYA'S BLACK SEAL...

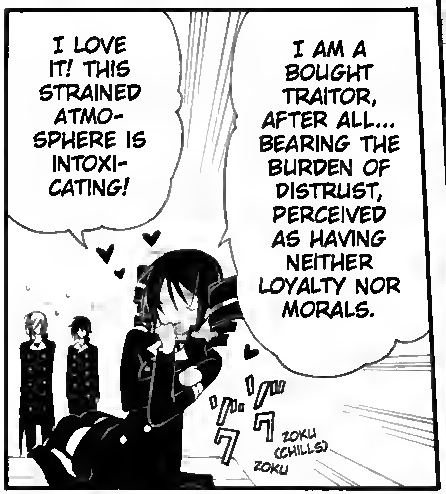
PLUS...
...THE WHEREABOUTS OF TSUKIMIYA...

—ABOUT OUR TURNCOAT ESCORT...
SUTA
SUTA (STRIDE)
I'M DONE CHANGING
IF SHE'S AN OFFICER WHO'D SELL OUT HER OWN ORGANIZATION FOR MONEY...
...I WONDER HOW FAR WE CAN TRUST HER.

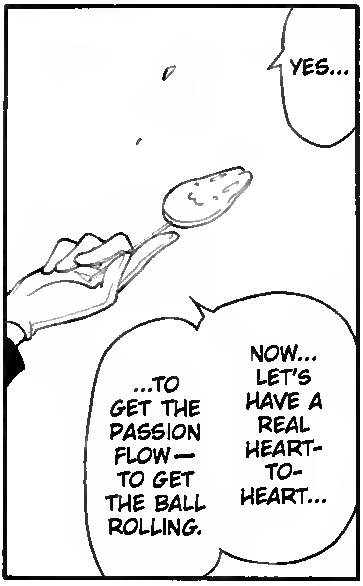
OR RATHER...
...HOW MUCH MONEY DID SHE GET FROM ARCANA...
...AND WHAT'S THE EXTENT OF HER WILLINGNESS TO HELP US OUT?
I HOPE SHE'S NOT EXPECTING TO FEED US A TRICKLE OF INFORMATION...
...IN EXCHANGE FOR A LITTLE POCKET MONEY...
GACHA GACHA
STOREROOM 5
...OH!
HAGU CMUNCH
HAGU
YOU FINALLY EMERGED.

SOR-RY.
TO (TMP)
I GOT SO BORED...
...I DECIDED TO PRICK MY EARS AND DO A LITTLE SNOOPING MYSELF.
NIKO (SMILE)
JUST PUTTING ON A COAT...
...TOOK YOU GENTLEMEN MORE THAN A FEW MINUTES, HUH?
I'VE LEARNED SOME-THING.
.....
WOULD YOU LIKE ONE?
HERE.
...ER...
THANK YOU.
FROG OR BEAR?
LOLLI-POP?
GIKU (FLINCH)
UH ...
N-NOT REALLY ...
...ARE EXTREMELY SUSPICIOUS OF ME, AREN'T YOU?
SUTON (THMP)
...AT ANY RATE, YOU BOTH ...

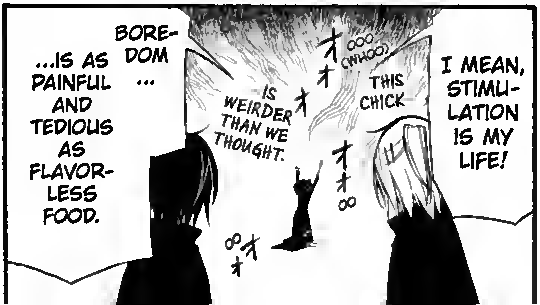
!?


I LOVE IT! THIS STRAINED ATMO-SPHERE IS INTOXI-CATING!
I AM A BOUGHT TRAITOR, AFTER ALL... BEARING THE BURDEN OF DISTRUST, PERCEIVED AS HAVING NEITHER LOYALTY NOR MORALS.
ZOKU (CHILLS) ZOKU

UN!!
きゅん
KYUN (SWOON)
...I JUST CAN'T GET ENOUGH!


YES...
NOW... LET'S HAVE A REAL HEART-TO-HEART...
...TO GET THE PASSION FLOW— TO GET THE BALL ROLLING.

I SEEM... TO BE A BIT OF A MASO-CHIST AT HEART.
TENSE CIRCUM-STANCES... LIKE THIS... MAKE MY HEART FILL WITH— MAKE MY HEART POUND.


BORE-DOM ...
...IS AS PAINFUL AND TEDIOUS AS FLAVOR-LESS FOOD.
OOO (WHOO)
IS WEIRDER THAN WE THOUGHT.
THIS CHICK
I MEAN, STIMU-LATION IS MY LIFE!

FIRST OF ALL...
BI (JAB)
...I'M SORRY TO TELL YOU THIS, BUT YOU TWO CAN NO LONGER LEAVE.

NOT...
...WITHOUT MY HELP!

SHA (SHAK)
ONLY THE OFFICERS OF KAMUHABURI ...
...HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO ENTER AND LEAVE THIS DIMENSION.

... HUH?

SO YOU'D BEST FINISH YOUR JOB QUICK...
...AND HOPE YOU MAKE IT HOME BEFORE YOU GET ON MY BAD SIDE...
...OR ELSE... YOU'LL BE TRAPPED HERE FOR-EVER...
...OR BE FOUND OUT BY OTHER KAMUHABURI AGENTS AND EXECUTED.
.....!

NO SIGNAL
By group
Arcana Izumi
Arcana Maki

HEY.
CALL IZUMI AND ASK HIM.
RIGHT. I'M ON IT...
KACHI (CLICK) KACHI

HEE HEE!
SO YOU REALLY DIDN'T KNOW ANY OF THIS?
I DID TELL ARCANA BEFORE-HAND...
YOU'VE... BEEN SET UP.

OUT OF RANGE...!?

TSU (SHIP)
DIDN'T I TELL YOU?

HEE...♡ STIMU-LATING!

ALL EXTERNAL CONTACT MUST GO THROUGH ME.
ONLY OFFICERS ARE ABLE TO CONNECT TO THE OUTSIDE.

DAMN THIS WOMAN...!!
I'M HOPING YOU MAKE IT HOME ALIVE!
IT DOESN'T BENEFIT ME ONE IOTA TO KILL YOU TWO.
AU CONTRAIRE!
IT SEEMS TO ME LIKE YOU'RE TRYING TO PUT US AT A DISADVANTAGE SO YOU CAN TAKE US OUT.
TCH... IN THAT CASE...
...DO YOU... ACTUALLY INTEND TO HELP US OUT AT ALL?
I'M ON YOUR SIDE, SO PLEASE RELAX.
I WILL RELAY THE REQUESTED INFORMATION AND SUPPORT YOU.
KATSU
KATSU (TAK)
BESIDES, ARCANA HAS ONLY PAID ME AN ADVANCE THUS FAR.
...I DON'T INTEND TO SHARE ANY EXTRA-SENSITIVE, EXTRA-DANGEROUS INTEL THAT WOULD EXCEED THE FEE THAT I AM RECEIVING...
PERO (LICK)
... WELL ...
... EXCEPT ...

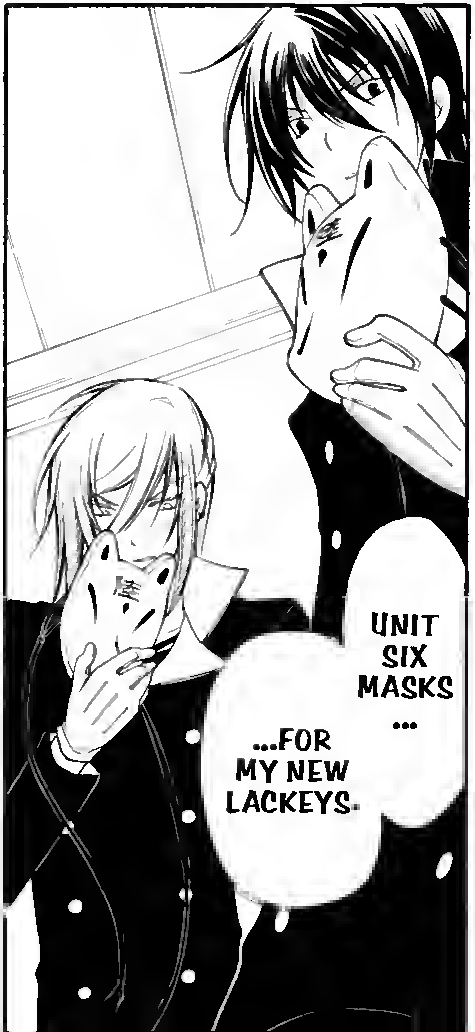
ESPECIALLY CONCERNING THAT...
THE GIRL YOU WERE DISCUSSING JUST NOW.
"TSUKIMIYA."
GAJI (BITE)
I ABSOLUTELY REFUSE TO TOUCH IT.
...OH...
...BUT...
KURU (TWIRL)
...TCH.
TOKIWA'S SCRUTINY IS ESPECIALLY SHARP WHEN IT COMES TO HER...
IF YOU WANT TO KNOW ANYTHING REGARDING HER, YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN.
SO YOU'RE NOT THAT MOTIVATED TO HELP AFTER ALL.
I WILL NOT PARTICIPATE, BUT I ALSO WILL NOT INTERFERE...
...SO FEEL FREE TO INVESTIGATE AS YOU WILL.

DO (CRUMB)
BOGO (SMASH)
...IF YOUR ACTIONS PUT ME AT RISK...
...I WILL NOT HESITATE TO HAND YOU OVER TO TOKIWA AS INTRUDERS.
FU (FWOO)
DO KEEP THAT IN MIND.
—SO THIS...
...IS THE OFFICER WHO SOLD OUT KAMU-HABURI...
STIM-ULAT-ING!
TOTALLY WILLING TO CUT HER TIES WITH ARCANA IN AN INSTANT TOO.

EACH UNIT MUST REPORT IN ACCORDING TO A STRICT SCHEDULE.
UNIT SIX IS DUE AT FIVE...SO WE SHOULD GET GOING.

...NOW, THEN...
...I NEED TO MAKE MY ROUTINE REPORT TO TOKIWA-SAN.

...OH, BUT FIRST...


UNIT SIX MASKS...
...FOR MY NEW LACKEYS.

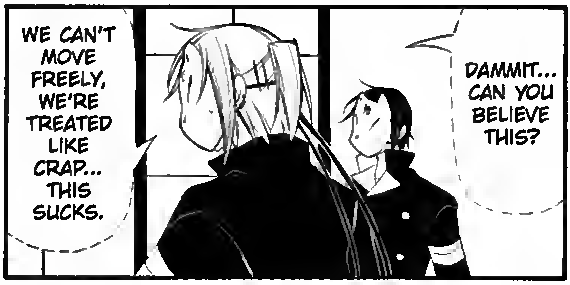
GAPO (PHOP)

MASKS SIX

...THEY LOOK GOOD ON YOU! ♡

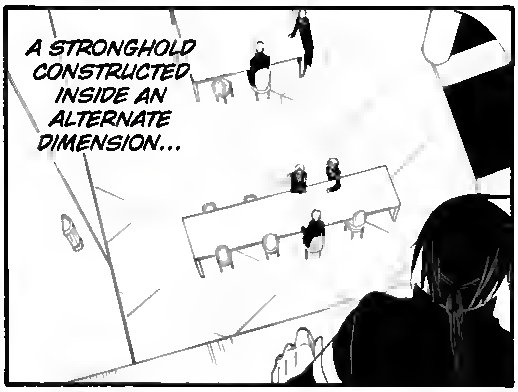
KATSU (TAK)
KATSU

...COULD YOU QUIT FIDGETING SO MUCH?
... YOU TWO ...
DO YOU WANT TO BE DISCOVERED?
URK!
S... SORRY.


WE CAN'T MOVE FREELY, WE'RE TREATED LIKE CRAP... THIS SUCKS.
DAMMIT... CAN YOU BELIEVE THIS?

I THINK WE'LL BE FOUND OUT.
AND DO YOU REALLY THINK THESE CLOTHES AND MASKS ARE ENOUGH TO DISGUISE US?

DO THEY REALLY... LIVE HERE?


A STRONGHOLD CONSTRUCTED INSIDE AN ALTERNATE DIMENSION...

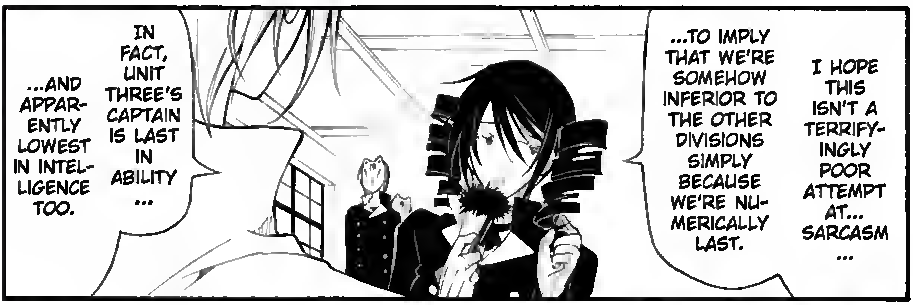
—KAMU-HABURI...

DON'T STOP SO SUDDENLY!
!?
WHAT THE ...?
OW.
OH.
DON
(BUMP)

I'VE SEEN HIM BEFORE!
ARGH!!
SA (PANT)
UNEASY...
THE YOUNGER ONE...
WE MET WHEN ARCANA WAS RAIDED.
LET ME HIDE!
...WHAT IS IT?
WE'VE RUN INTO THIS TIRE-SOME LOT.
TCH ...
BOSO (MUTTER)
OH? WHAT A SUR-PRISE.
THIS IS BAD ...!!
I WONDERED BRIEFLY WHO IT COULD BE, BUT WITH THOSE GAUDY DRILLS...
...IT COULD ONLY BE THE CAPTAIN OF UNIT SIX.

LOW-EST DIVI-SION?
MY, MY...

...TO BE ABLE TO COME IN LATER THAN THE REST.
OFF TO REPORT IN? HOW LUCKY FOR UNIT SIX, THE LOWEST OF THE DIVISIONS...


...AND APPAR-ENTLY LOWEST IN INTEL-LIGENCE TOO.
IN FACT, UNIT THREE'S CAPTAIN IS LAST IN ABILITY ...
...TO IMPLY THAT WE'RE SOMEHOW INFERIOR TO THE OTHER DIVISIONS SIMPLY BECAUSE WE'RE NU-MERICALLY LAST.
I HOPE THIS ISN'T A TERRIFY-INGLY POOR ATTEMPT AT... SARCASM ...

SU (SSK)
WELL ...
...IF YOU WILL EXCUSE US, WE'RE IN A RUSH.

DAN (SLAM)

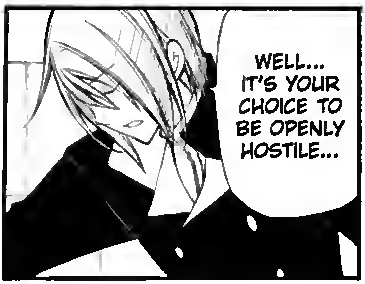
HOW SAD.
(PIRI (CRACKLE)

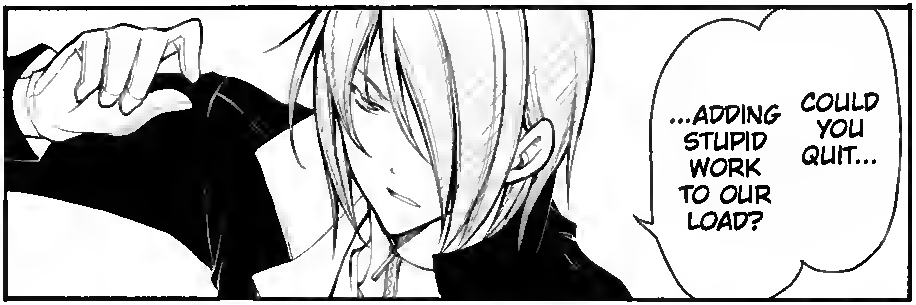
I THINK I'M GONNA REST HERE FOR A BIT.
MY LEGS ARE SOOO TIRED...
WHAT'S THIS?
MY...
SORRY, BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO USE A DIFFERENT ROUTE.
UM...OHMA-SAN, I THINK YOU'RE JUST INVITING HER TO MOCK YOUR INTELLI-GENCE MO—
SHUT IT!
HAAH...YOU TRULY ARE SIMPLEMINDED BEYOND COMPREHEN-SION...
...NOT TO MENTION VULGAR AND TEDIOUS ...
IN PLAIN TERMS, A BOOR.
LIFTING YOUR LEG AGAINST ME...
...ONLY FURTHER HIGHLIGHTS YOUR DISGUSTING FACTOR...
FOR THE MOMENT, HOW ABOUT I CHOP OFF...
...THE OB-STRUCTING APPEND-AGE?

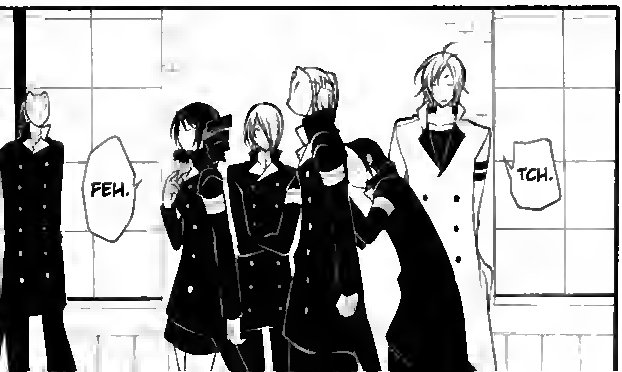
MAN ...
THE CAPTAINS OF THREE AND SIX ARE AT IT AGAIN.
THOSE TWO ARE ALWAYS PICKING FIGHTS.
KIKU-SAKA-SAN, PLEASE STOP THEM.
WE'RE TOO SCARED TO STEP IN.
FUWAAA (YAWN)
...KEEP IT DOWN, WILL YA?
YAWN ...
OH ...!
I'M... ...EXHAUSTED. ICHIKAWA FORCED ME TO PLAY VIDEO GAMES WITH HIM UNTIL DAWN.
WAKE UP! IT'S YOUR TURN!
LET ME SLEEP!
SFX: GUU (SNORE) GUU
ARE WE FOUND OUT!?
JIII (STARE)
ARE WE!?
(BIKU) (FLINCH)
WH-WHY'S HE LOOKING THIS WAY?
... SIGH ...
(GAKUU) (SLUMP)
I WISH EVERYONE WERE AS CLOSE AS THESE TWO.
THOSE TWO ARE SUCH GOOD PALS!

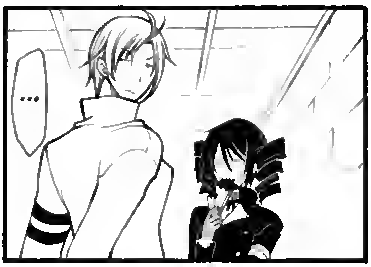
DON
(SLAM)

...AND YOU'RE ONLY DELAYING HER MORE, OHMA.
...BUT KANADE IS NEARLY LATE TO REPORT IN...


WELL... IT'S YOUR CHOICE TO BE OPENLY HOSTILE...

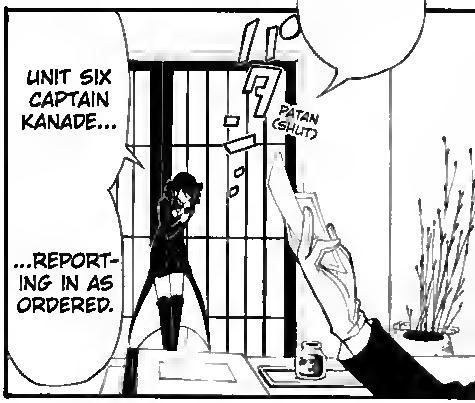

...ADDING STUPID WORK TO OUR LOAD?
COULD YOU QUIT...

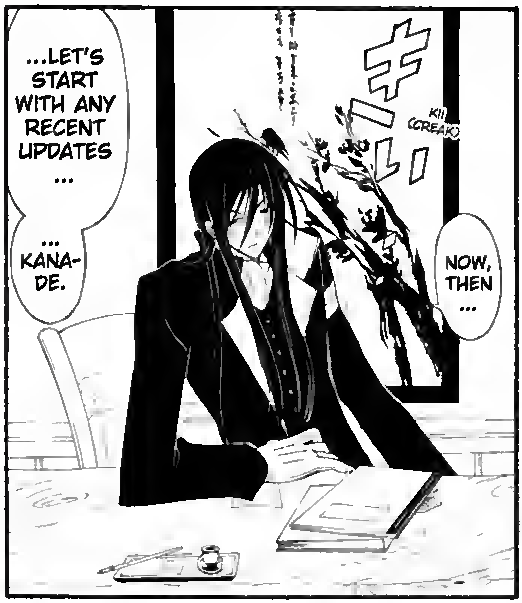

FEH.
TCH.


...

THOSE TWO MEN OF HERS... ARE THEY NEW?
THEY SEEM ANTSY.

GET OFFA ME!


—EXCUSE ME.
UNIT SIX CAPTAIN KANADE...
...REPORTING IN AS ORDERED.
PATAN (SHUT)


...LET'S START WITH ANY RECENT UPDATES ...
... KANADE.
NOW, THEN ...
KII (CREAK)

RIGHT ON TIME... NEARLY.
SLI (SHIP)
.....

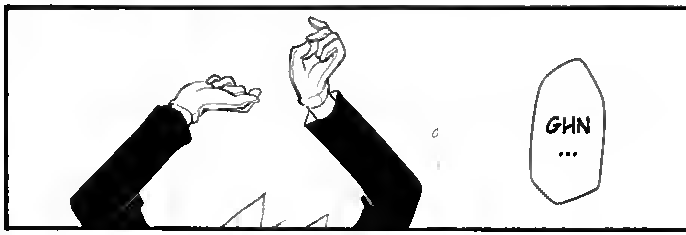
In regards to the Divine Relic discovered near the Black Sea the other day...
...it was successfully retrieved...
Next, the joint mission with Unit Five...
AH... NICE, VERY NICE.
WHILE WE WERE WALKING JUST NOW.
WHEN'D YOU MANAGE TO STICK THE SPELL ON HER?
SHE TOLD US WE WERE FREE TO INVESTIGATE ON OUR OWN...
...SO I DECIDED THAT MEANT WE WERE FREE TO USE HER.
...THAT'S ALL I HAVE TO REPORT.
UNDERSTOOD.
NOTHING ELSE OUT OF THE ORDINARY.
PEKORI (BOW)
IF THAT'S ALL...
...I WILL SEE MYSELF OUT.
KATSU (TAP)

KATSU
...KANADE...
KATSU CHAN
.....
I'M CONCERNED...
...THAT INFORMATION ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATION IS BEING LEAKED TO ARCANA.
HAVE ANY THOUGHTS ON THE MATTER?
.....HUH?

HEY!
— Oh my... is that true?
IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT INTEL ON KAMU-HABURI...
...HAS FOUND ITS WAY OUT.
UN-FORTU-NATE-LY...
...WE HAVE STRONG EVIDENCE THAT IT HAS.
IT CER-TAINLY COULD BE A COINCI-DENCE...
...BUT IT'S MORE REASON-ABLE TO ASSUME THAT WE'VE HAD A LEAK.
MAKINO...
THAT IDIOT
HOW COULD ARCANA DO SUCH A... GRRN.
BUT THIS IS THRILL-ING! ♡
SHALL I DEAL WITH HIM?
NO... THAT WOULD ONLY CONFIRM THAT KAMUHA-BURI IS HERE.
— HOW-EVER ...
WE'LL LEAVE HIM ALONE FOR NOW.
TRUE ...
...A TOP ARCANA EMPLOYEE IS IN THE FRONT ON THE SEVENTH FLOOR.
RIGHT NOW...
PIRA (GLIP)

...I MUST ASK YOU AGAIN IF YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW THIS HAPPENED.
ZAWA (SHIVER)
...I FEEL...
GI (CREAK)

SLEEPY
UNIT SIX IS IN THERE RIGHT NOW ANYWAY...


GHN...

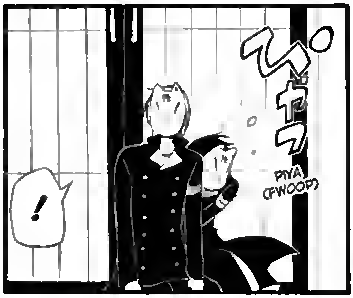
WALKING SLOW WON'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE.
WE'RE VERY LATE FOR UNIT FIVE'S REPORT TIME.
PLEASE WALK FASTER, ICHIKAWA-SAN!

YOU'RE JOKING! WHO KNEW THEY'D CATCH ON THIS QUICK...
ORO (PANIC)
IF WE WANNA MAKE IT OUTTA THIS ALIVE, SHOULDN'T WE ABORT THE MISSION AND ESCAPE?
ORO
IDIOT! WE CAN'T LEAVE THIS PLACE WITHOUT HER, RE-MEMBER?
WHAT !?
HEY!
QUIET... WE'RE KINDA BUSY RIGHT NOW.
HEY.
IS THERE NO LIFE-LINE ?
UNNH... BUT WE'RE IN TROUBLE IF WE STAY.

YOU'RE UNIT SIX, AREN'T YOU?
KANADE STILL INSIDE?

ANOTHER GUY I RAN INTO AT ARCANA!
EEE-EEEK!

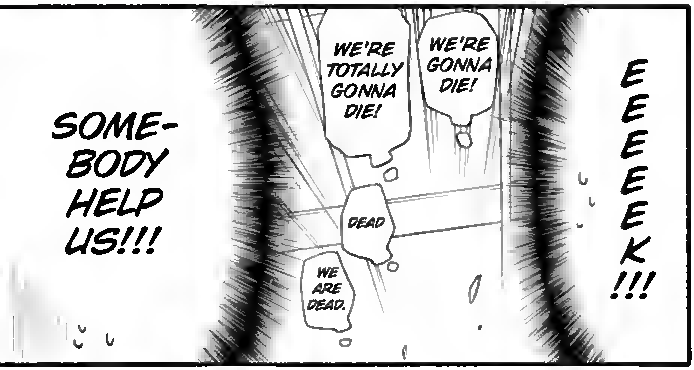
HE'S BAD NEWS TOO, HUH.


!
PIVA (FWOOP)

DAMMIT... THIS IS JUST IM-POSSIBLE.
.....
YES, THE CAPTAIN IS STILL INSIDE. CAN WE HELP YOU?

MM...
UNITS FIVE AND SIX...
...OFTEN WORK TOGETHER ON MISSIONS, BUT...

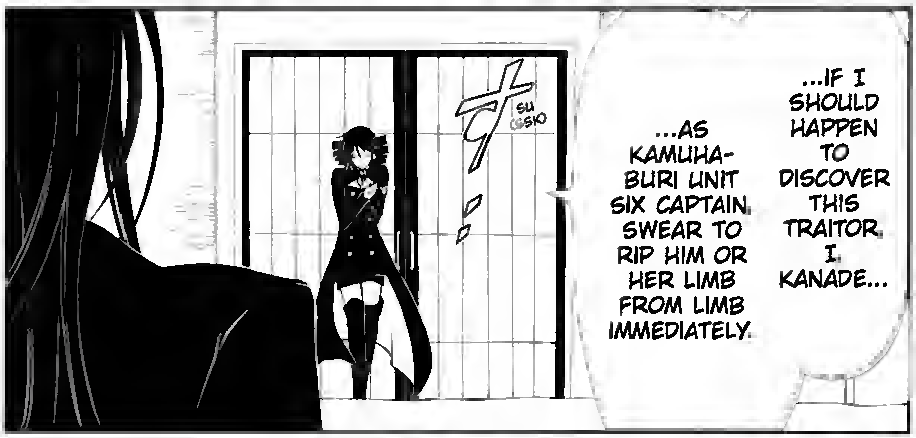
...YOU TWO DON'T SMELL FAMIL-IAR.
KUN (SNIFF)


SOME-BODY HELP US!!!
WE'RE TOTALLY GONNA DIE!
WE'RE GONNA DIE!
DEAD
WE ARE DEAD.
EEEEEEK!!!

EEP ...!
S-SMELL?
SNFFL! SNRT!

...DO I KNOW ANY-THING...
...ABOUT THE INTEL... LEAK?

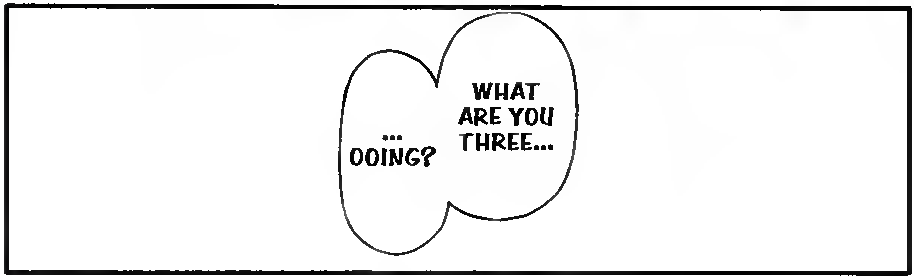
...WELL, LET ME SEE...
AT THE MOMENT ...
...NOTHING IN PARTICULAR COMES TO MIND.
HOWEVER ...

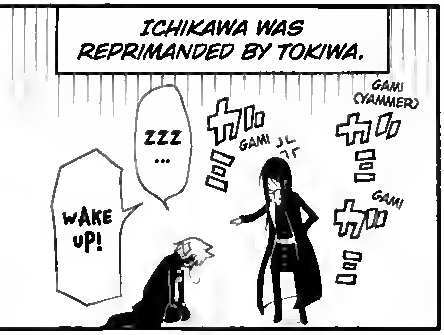

...IF I SHOULD HAPPEN TO DISCOVER THIS TRAITOR, I, KANADE...
...AS KAMUHABURI UNIT SIX CAPTAIN, SWEAR TO RIP HIM OR HER LIMB FROM LIMB IMMEDIATELY.
SUGSIO

YOU CAN TRUST ME.

WELL ...
...IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME.
キィ：
KII (CREAK)
ニコ
NIKO (SMILE)
... VERY WELL.

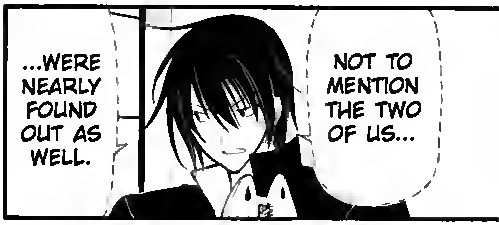
GACHA
GACHAKO

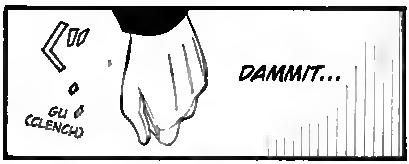

WHAT ARE YOU THREE...
...OOING?


ICHIKAWA WAS REPRIMANDED BY TOKIWA.
ZZZ...
GAMI
GAMI (YAMMER)
GAMI
WAKE UP!

KA
KA
KATSU (TAK)

TCH...
A POSSIBLE LEAK TO ARCANA HAS BEEN DISCOVERED ALREADY...
THE PLANNING FOR THIS MISSION WAS TERRIBLE!


NOT TO MENTION THE TWO OF US...
...WERE NEARLY FOUND OUT AS WELL.

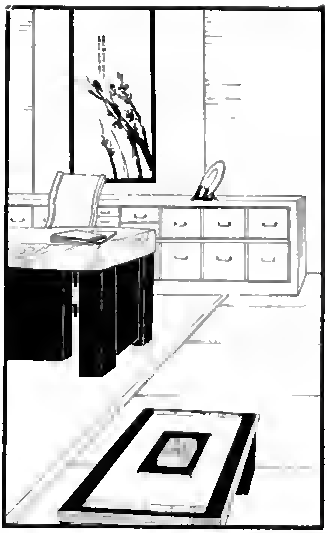

DAMMIT...
GU (CLENCH)

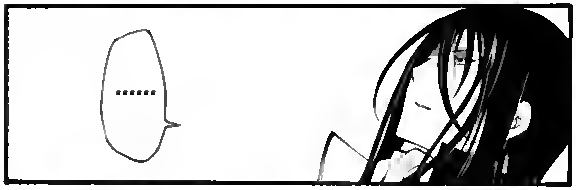
WITH NO EMERGENCY ESCAPE ROUTE... OR EVEN A WAY TO CONTACT THE OUTSIDE...
...THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN DO SPY WORK...!!

GOING FORWARD LIKE THIS IS A BAD IDEA.
GOTTA HURRY...

...HAVE TO GET OUTTA HERE STAT.
WE...

HAAH...
ドカ
DOKA (WHUMP)




.....

SU (SSK)

...ARE YOU THERE?
SETSU...

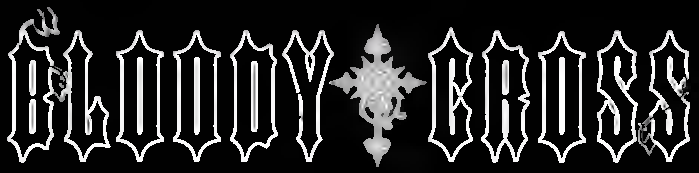
SE-TSU.
...YOU CALLED?
NOSO CHURIMURO
ARE YOU...
...SELLING KAMU-HABURI SECRETS TO ARCANA?

EVEN IF THERE WERE THE SLIGHTEST CHANCE OF THAT HAPPENING...
BOSO BOSO
.....
...THE SELF-LOATHING WOULD HAVE KILLED ME BY NOW.
HEH...
I APPRECIATE YOUR HONESTY.

...I'M TASKING YOU WITH AN INTERNAL INVESTIGATION.
SETSU
...
THERE IS A TRAITOR INSIDE KAMUHABURI.
USE YOUR AUTHORITY AS INSPECTOR TO EXPOSE THE GUILTY PARTY.

AND WHEN I FIND THEM?
.....

BLOODY CROSS 6 END


BLOODY CROSS

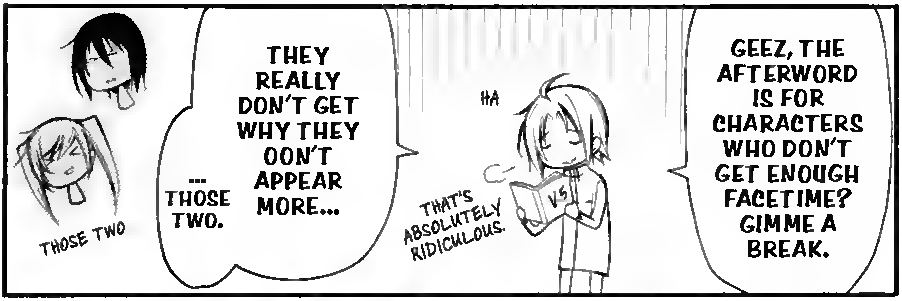
...QUITE THE EXTENSIVE SPY HUNT STARTING THIS MORNING.
THEY'VE LAUNCHED...
KANADE, WHO IS ALSO PLOTTING KAMUHABURI'S INTERNAL COLLAPSE...
...ON ALL OF THE THE DIVINE RELICS IN KAMUHABURI'S POSSESSION.
ALL OF THEM.
I WANT YOU TWO TO BRING BACK COMPLETE DETAILS...
TWO OBJECTIVES MUST BE COMPLETED FOR THIS INFILTRATION SCHEME TO BE A SUCCESS...
...THAT THERE ARE SPIES INSIDE IN THE FIRST PLACE.
PAKU (CHOMP)
ぱく
...I'M THE ONE WHO LEAKED...

IF THE SPIES ARE PLANNING TO MAKE A MOVE...
...IT'LL BE ON A NIGHT WHEN TOKIWA-SAN IS ABSENT, FOR SURE.
FIRST, THEY MUST STEAL THE TOP SECRET KAMIGURA...
THAT BACK THERE IS THE KAMI-GURA— THE RELIC RECORD.
封
GO (RMBL)
ゴ
GO
ゴ
...WHICH LISTS ALL THE DIVINE RELICS...
GO
ゴ
...IN THE POSSESSION OF THE FORMIDABLE KAMUHABURI!!

AND THEN THEY MUST RESCUE TSUKIMIYA...!!
SACHA OKAZAKI
IN SUCH OVERWHELMINGLY DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES, FACING SUCH OPPOSITION; CAN ARCANA'S SPIES...
THAT BITCH... UNH!
I'M JUST AS DISGUSTED TO LEARN THAT THIS RIFFRAFF WAS IN UNIT SIX.
SHE REALLY DID SELL US OUT!!
I ENCOURAGE YOU TO INTERROGATE THEM...
...TO THE FULL EXTENT OF YOUR SATISFACTION.
...WHETHER THOSE TWO ARE SPIES OR THIEVES, I AM COMPLETELY INNOCENT...
...AND HAVE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THEIR ACTIVITIES.

To be Continued in BLOODY CROSS Vol. 7!!

# AFTER-WORD SCRIBBLES


GEEZ, THE AFTERWORD IS FOR CHARACTERS WHO DON'T GET ENOUGH FACETIME? GIMME A BREAK.
HA
THAT'S ABSOLUTELY RIDICULOUS.
THEY REALLY DON'T GET WHY THEY OON'T APPEAR MORE...
... THOSE TWO.
THOSE TWO

GI (GJARU)
キィ
IT'S TOUGH BEING POPULAR...
THEN IT CAME TO THEM:
THEIR FACETIME HADN'T SHRUNK... OPPORTUNITIES WEREN'T COMING AROUND BECAUSE HE WAS ON-SCREEN TOO MUCH.
PYUUU (WHISTLE)
AHHHH I'M STARVING
I'VE BEEN WORKING SO HARD. I'VE HAD NO TIME TO REST
LISTEN UP, YOU SHAGGY-HAIRED GOOD-FOR-NOTHING...
GO (RMBL)
GO
...I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO GIVE YOU.
RAAAH,
GAH, WHAT THE!?
GYAAAA!?
GASH!
GASH! (GRAB)
DON'T EAT IT!!
BAKU (CHOMP)
THAT'S WHY YOU DON'T GET ANY FACE TIME!!
PLEASE TAKE THESE AND GIVE ME MORE FACE—
DON (BOOM)
ENJOY THIS TOP-OF-THE-LINE, WORLD FAMOUS MELON BUN
(ONLY THREE MADE PER DAY)
ITS EXQUISITE FLAVOR IS THE PEAK OF LUXURY
BRIBE
VOLUME SEVEN SHALL BE FULLY LOADED WITH MY APPEAL!!!
DAMN IT!!

# BLOODY CROSS 6

Shiwo Komeyama

Translation: Mari Morimoto • Lettering: Abigail Blackman

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

BLOODY CROSS Vol.6 ©2011 Shiwo Komeyama/SQUARE ENIX CO., LTD. First published in Japan in 2011 by SQUARE ENIX CO., LTD. English translation rights arranged with SQUARE ENIX CO., LTD. and Hachette Book Group through Tuttle-Mori Agency, Inc., Tokyo.

Translation ©2015 by SQUARE ENIX CO., LTD.

All rights reserved. In accordance with the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976, the scanning, uploading, and electronic sharing of any part of this book without the permission of the publisher is unlawful piracy and theft of the author's intellectual property. If you would like to use material from the book (other than for review purposes), prior written permission must be obtained by contacting the publisher at permissions@hbgusa.com. Thank you for your support of the author's rights.

Yen Press
Hachette Book Group
1290 Avenue of the Americas,
New York, NY 10104

www.HachetteBookGroup.com
www.YenPress.com

Yen Press is an imprint of Hachette Book Group, Inc. The Yen Press name and logo are trademarks of Hachette Book Group, Inc.

The publisher is not responsible for websites (or their content) that are not owned by the publisher.

First Yen Press ebook Edition: March 2015

ebook ISBN: 978-0-316-37993-9

App ISBN: 978-0-316-37994-6